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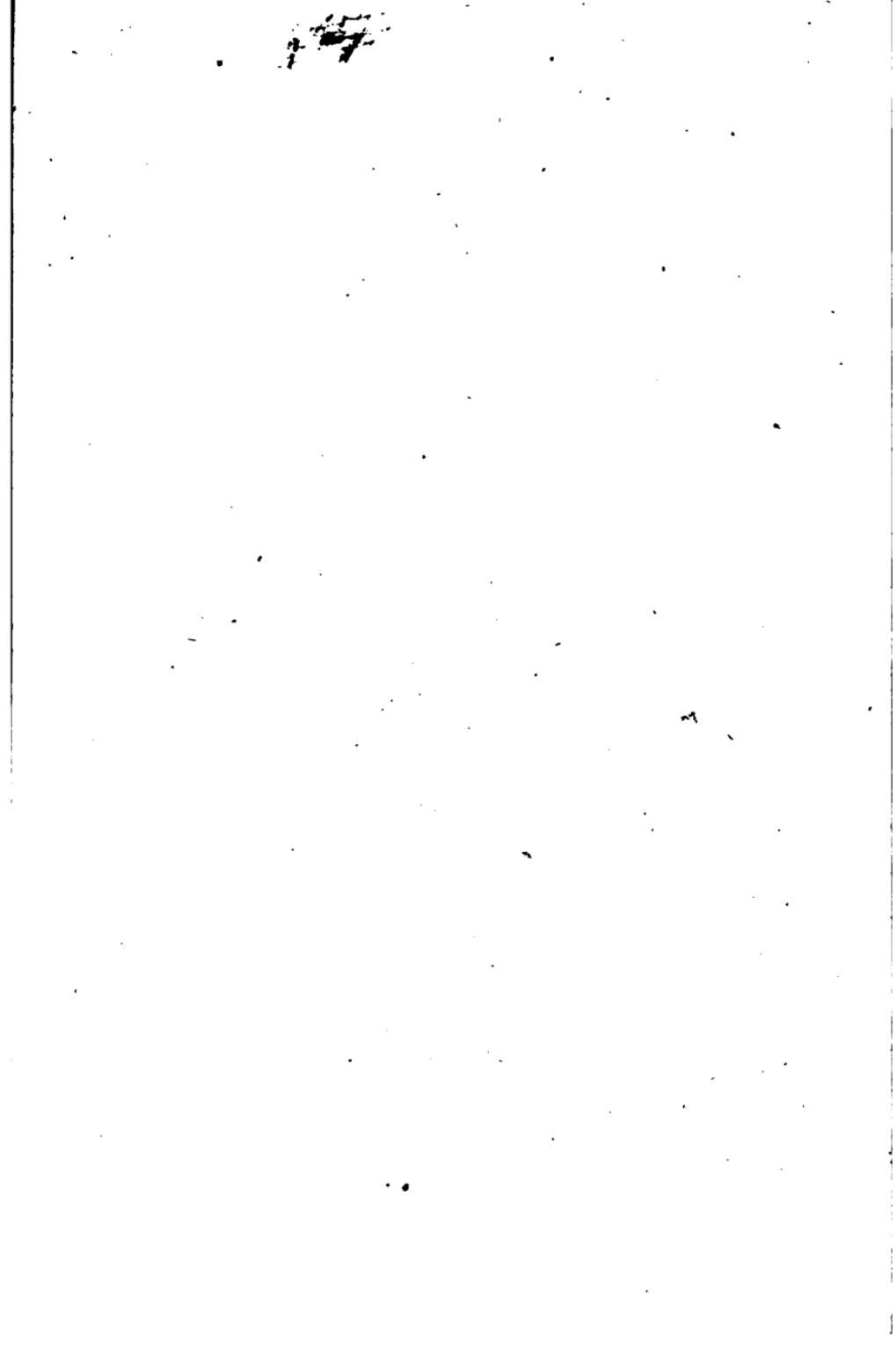
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A SPRING DAY  
AND OTHER POEMS.  
BY  
E. STEVENS







*Gives ~~the~~ her book*

# A SPRING DAY,

*AND OTHER POEMS.*

BY

E. STEVENS.

*LONDON:*

W. POOLE, 12A, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

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## A Spring Day.

---

OUR home is not in Eden, but it hath  
Some sweets of Eden in it.

It is like

A town-grown rose with smoke-smutched outer leaves,  
But, in its innermost heart, daintily pure  
As any sister rose, that blushing blooms  
Beside some country home in country air.

Our home is in Mid-England, where the earth  
Mourns the lost charms of her once glorious face,  
Spoiled of her beauty by man's greed of gain.  
'T was Earth's misfortune to be wealthy here,  
And hold in her great heart those carbon stores,  
Whose worth outvies the purer diamond :  
And that rich ore, which, smelted by fierce fires,  
Yields the most useful metal unto man,  
Of which he makes those instruments and tools,  
By which he works such wonders in the world,  
By which, alas ! he also works such woe.

The ancient Seer spake of a time to come  
When War shall be no more, and gentle Peace  
Shall bend the spear into a pruning-hook,  
And take the sword, and make of it a share.

As yet, the Seer's sweet words seem but a dream :  
God speed the time of their reality !  
For hitherto, through each succeeding age,  
War oft hath stol'n the treasured stores of Peace ;  
And, spite of her entreaties and her tears,  
Hath turned her workshops into arsenals,  
And in her furnace made the metal glow,  
And in her foundries cast and grooved his guns,  
And on her anvils shaped the sword and spear ;  
And in one year wasted a century's gains,  
And in one year blasted a century's growth,  
Filling the world with want and deathful woe.

To know Earth shrined, within herself, these stores,  
Was lure sufficient to excite man's greed.  
Intent on gain, the glory of Earth's face  
Held him not back from piercing her great heart.  
He delved his way full many a fathom down,  
And found, at length, the treasures that he sought ;  
And, reckless of her many facial charms,  
Threw over them vast heaps of slaty shale,  
Blurring her beauty, far and wide, for leagues.

Then, to complete the ravage thus begun,  
All trades that scatter dust, and vomit smoke,

And breathe out sulphurous flame, soon settle here,  
And fill the region with a ceaseless din.  
The smutty smoke trails over all the land,  
And soon destroys what loveliness is left ;  
And almost veils from sight the sky of day.  
And lurid fires rob night of half her stars,  
And fill the air with fitful gleams and glooms.

Happy for us, we live not in the midst  
Of this strange territory of fire and smoke ;  
For there, look where you may, the smoke o' th' land  
Goes up like one wide furnace everywhere.  
Nature's fresh face can nowhere there be seen,  
And her sweet voices there are never heard.

Not in the midst, but on the marge, we live,  
Belted about with furnace, forge, mill, mine ;  
We hear huge hammers thudding day and night,  
And the harsh grinding of the ponderous rolls  
That shoot the metal out in ribbon bands.  
And night with us hath other lights than stars,  
Which bicker into brightness and then die,  
Flash into view, then, ghost-like, fleet away.

South-west and west, this belt that rings us in  
Is but few furlongs broad. When this is past,  
Fair Nature soon begins to smile again,  
And show herself in all her wealth of charms.

So that, although we live within the realm  
Of ever-gleaming fires, and trailing smoke,  
We oft catch glimpses of that other realm  
Where Nature in her splendour reigns supreme ;  
Where Earth goes clad in beautiful array,  
And Heaven bends o'er her as one smit with love.

We have reminders, too, about us here,  
Of the fair realm beyond, when turf and trees  
Put on their bravery as the springtime comes.  
For even here, we have our turf and trees,  
Which, spite of dust and smoke, live and look green,  
Look green, at least, when wonder-working Spring  
Unreefs the tender leaves from soot-soiled buds,  
And spreads her first fresh verdure o'er the ground.

'T is well, for us, the Vicarage and the Church  
Were not put sheer upon the public way,  
But thrown some perches back ; standing within  
Three acres of green sward, and fenced about  
With a high wall that yields some privacy.  
And round the wall, inside, some hardy trees  
Furnish us with a summer screen of leaves.

This stretch of turf and the surrounding trees  
Are to be prized in such a place as this ;  
And we do prize them, my sweet wife and I.  
Yes, we do prize them, as they only can  
Who love fair Nature with a love like ours,

And bow in worship to her glorious grace ;  
Who, absent from her, pine for her dear charms,  
And dream of all her beauty day and night,  
As lover dreams of her he dearly loves.

My wife and I are one by marriage vows,  
One by the love that links heart unto heart,  
But one, still more, by sympathy of soul,  
Which is the closest union of all.

God gave us each a soul made quick to see,  
And evermore to love His glorious works ;  
And so it is, that she, my gentle wife,  
Loves Nature with a passion like to mine.  
And she knows Nature. She was country-born.  
Her earliest memories are of fields and flowers.  
An ancient wood stood by her early home,  
And through the long and sumptuous summer days  
Murmured the love of woods into her heart ;  
And all the birds that pour themselves in song,  
Sang the sweet love of birds into her soul ;  
And all the wilding flowers of all the year,  
Smiled love of them into her being's core ;  
And the blue heavens, free from defiling smoke,  
Swept by the ever-changing summer clouds,  
Beamed love of them into her through her eyes.  
Nature spake kindly to her when a child,  
And she loves Nature with a child-like love.

My wife was country-born. But upon me  
The light first fell within a busy town.

Fields, flowers, and woods were not the things I saw  
Around me in the dawning of my days.  
Methinks, I first saw Nature in the sky,  
For even in towns the sky is never lost ;  
But dusty streets are ceiled with heaven's own blue,  
And souls that yearn for beauty see it there.  
Methinks, I first saw Nature in the sky,  
And as I looked in wonder on her charms,  
Ah ! surely she looked lovingly on me ;  
And my young heart felt flutterings of that love,  
Which ever since hath wedded me to her.  
And as a lover never can forget  
The look of loved one, when she first looked love,  
So skies, and clouds, and sunsets, and day-dawns,  
And all the gleaming splendour of the stars—  
All things, indeed, connected with the sky—  
Were somehow mingled with my earliest thoughts,  
And still are mingled with my later ones ;  
Were somehow mingled with my earliest love,  
And still are mingled with my love to-day.

And though through youth and early manhood both,  
I was a constant dweller in the town,  
Yet, am I not without remembrances  
Which bear me back to early boyhood days,  
Of yearly visits to the country made,  
When, for the space of half a moon or more,  
Sweet Nature clasped me to her beauteous breast,  
As mother clasps her baby-boy to hers ;

And we had sweet communings, she and I,  
And life seemed all a dream of paradise.  
Ah me, even now, those happy, happy times,  
Memory holds in her hand, like fadeless flowers.

And memory still goes gathering such-like flowers,  
Whose bloom an everlasting freshness wears ;  
For all through life a day with Nature spent,  
Hath been to me a day to memory dear—  
A day distinguished more than other days ;  
A day that on its forehead wears a star,  
And lightens other days, which else were dark :  
A day of cheer when other days were sad,  
A day of childhood amid manhood's days,  
A day when all is fresh, and fair, and sweet,  
Though other days be full of wrinkling care.

To dwell, as we do, where the virgin Spring  
Is filched of half her freshness ere May close,  
Is not what we would choose, had we our choice.  
A country home is that which we think best,  
A country parsonage the best home of all ;  
But God, in His good wisdom, says, "Live here ;"  
And so we live, and thank Him for our lot ;  
Happy to live where He may fix our home ;  
Happy to labour where He may appoint.

But when occasion serves, my wife and I  
Seek, now and then, to have a holiday,

And spend it in a simple country stroll ;  
Living beneath the sky the live-long day,  
As live the birds, and all the wilding flowers,  
And such a day to us is dear indeed.

And, doubtless, we have compensations too ;  
At least, the compensation contrast gives.  
To those who bide within the dingy town,  
The simplest country view is Eden-fair.  
A few trees make a wood to him who sees  
Some spindling poplars growing by his door,  
But sees no other trees for miles around.  
The dweller in the dark thinks twilight noon ;  
And a small portion makes a poor man rich.  
Shadows throw up the light, and dissonant chords  
Make perfect harmony divinelier seem.  
The desert makes the promised land more fair.  
Winter's wild gloom adds glory to the Spring ;  
And pain gives pleasure half her power to please ;  
And every sorrow is a foil to joy.  
And this dark life we spend on earth shall be  
A foil to that we hope to spend in heaven :  
And heaven itself shall all the heavenlier seem,  
Because we passed from sabbings to its songs,  
Because we passed from restlessness to rest,  
Because we passed through darkness to its light,  
Because we fought with Death ere Life was won.

We have the compensation contrast gives,  
And, haply, other compensations too.

There is no lot that is all loss—no gain :  
A country walk is tenfold more to us  
A rapturous enjoyment, than to those  
Who every morn look out from country homes  
On beauty that is common as the morn.  
He who takes hunger with him to a feast,  
Thinks every common dish the daintiest fare ;  
While he who always sits at a full board,  
Oft turns from dainties, caring not to eat.

Winter had passed, and we had reached mid-May.  
As yet, through all the Spring, my wife and I  
Had been debarred from what we longed for much—  
A day of freedom for a country stroll.  
We longed to spend one day from dawn to dark  
With Nature in the newness of her life,  
Ere yet the maiden freshness of the Spring  
Had fleeted by, as all earth's fair things fleet.

The day of freedom we had longed for came,  
And, having made all ready overnight,  
We were astir with the first show of dawn ;  
And ere the sun arose, we issued forth,  
And walking briskly, one half-hour sufficed  
To place behind us all the realm of smoke.  
And then we slackened speed, and all the day  
Walked with a slower step, and sometimes stood,  
And sometimes sat—just as we felt inclined :  
Our aim was pleasure, and we pleased ourselves.

O, for fit words to speak of that fair morn,  
And tell of all we saw, and thought, and felt!  
Ah! wish, how vain! for where may words be found,  
That shall portray the grace that Nature wore;  
Give to our thoughts befitting utterance,  
And what we felt as in a mirror show?  
Words do but poorly symbol things we see,  
And fail to express the soul of many a thought;  
And oftener still, though choicely chosen, fail  
To express the soul of what we sometimes feel.

The morning broke bright as a dream of heaven,  
And pure as if its light came fresh from God.  
The Sun arose in all his glory garbed;  
And what a glory is it he puts on!  
How rivalless he takes his place in heaven,  
The undisputed sovereign of the skies;  
With none to challenge him through all his course,  
Or taunting, say, "Who gave thee right to reign?"  
God, when He made him, named him King of Day;  
And in the sight of all the visible heavens,  
Poured on his head the consecrating chrism,  
And crowned him with the splendour that we see;  
And with such regal gifts invested him,  
And clothed him with such amplitude of power,  
That all the worlds about him own his sway,  
And see in him their God-appointed king.

- We stood to see him rise. Some strips of cloud  
Hung on the eastern sky, and as the Sun

Drew nigher to his rising, they became  
Suffused with such a brightness by his beams,  
That they resembled burnished silver bars.  
Their silvery brightness told that he was near ;  
And, in a moment, on the horizon's verge  
His rim appeared—first, a thin line of light,  
Which, in another moment, grew a curve,  
Then, half his globe was given to our gaze ;  
And then uprose the whole resplendent round,  
And he was fairly on his way through heaven.

Rebekah-like, Earth sees her lord's approach,  
And veils herself to meet her coming spouse.  
The veil she wears heightens, not hides, her charms.  
And as, in Sarah's tent, Isaac withdrew,  
The veil Rebekah had thrown o'er her face,  
And gazed, enamoured, on his comely bride,  
And kissed her with the kisses of his mouth ;  
So, when the bridegroom Sun entered the tent  
Formed by the arching, azure-tinctured skies,  
Impatient to behold earth's glorious face,  
He straight withdrew the mist-woven veil which hung  
Before the face of his all-beauteous bride,  
And kissed her with the kisses of his mouth,  
And all day long looked wondering on her charms.

A pallid Moon lay on the south-west sky :  
The poor pale thing was lustreless as a cloud,  
And for a cloud might readily have passed,

But that she was more perfectly defined.  
'T was pitiful to see her looking so,  
With all her beauty and her brightness gone.  
She seemed like some dethroned and desolate queen,  
Or love-lorn maid, wandering she scarce knew where,  
And caring not to know, being so distraught.

At sunrise, we were treading meadow paths,  
For we had reached a purely rural realm,  
Well-wooded, river-watered, farm-bestrown,  
Resounding with the lowing of the kine,  
And vocal with the ceaseless song of birds,  
And redolent with every rural sweet.  
The May lay on the hedges far and near,  
As if the winter left enchanted snows,  
Which the warm sun was powerless to change.  
A glorious vision for the eye to see  
And for the mind to feast on, was the scene  
Which lay about us, freshly clad by Spring,  
And wearing now the freshness of the morn—  
The two-fold freshness of the morn and Spring—  
Each heightening each and making sweet more sweet,  
Each heightening each and making fair more fair,  
Each heightening each and making perfect all.

We wandered on, charmed by each sight and sound,  
With wonder, as the emotion of our minds,  
And rapture, as the feeling of our hearts,  
And words of both full often on our lips.  
Thrown into form our words were like to these :—

"The marvel of the Spring is come again,  
And Wonder's self looks through our eyes at it.  
Glory hath broken from the depth of gloom,  
And Life hath leaped out of the arms of Death,  
Fresh as an angel, and as beautiful.

"Nature discards her widowed, wintry state,  
And casts away her soiled and faded weeds,  
Renews her youth, and all her youthful charms,  
Puts on again her beauteous bridal robes,  
And wreathes about her brow the bridal flowers—  
Best intimation this that earth can give  
Of the pure, primal grace that Eden wore,  
And the more perfect grace that Heaven shall wear.

"Where, lately, all was odorous of the grave,  
And deathy-damp, soggy with mists and rains ;  
Now fragrance rises from unnumbered flowers,  
And earth, like one vast censer, breathes perfume.

"The solitary places are made glad ;  
Silence is broken by a thousand songs.  
Strangely transformed, the desert hath put on  
The glory of the garden of the Lord.  
It is as if all things had from their graves  
Uprisen, as saints shall rise, divinely fair,  
Fashioned to some exemplar in the skies.

"The winds that wailing went through all the woods,  
Looking for their lost loves, the gentle flowers,

Rejoice to-day o'er lost ones found again.  
‘Where have ye been,’ said they, unto the flowers ;  
‘We searched, but found you not, and thought you dead ;  
‘We thought you dead, where have ye been so long ?  
‘But ye are come again, and we are glad.’  
And lingering fondly round them, there they play,  
Then kiss them in their joy, and onward go,  
Sweet-scented by their dalliance with the flowers.

“As some great city puts its splendour on,  
And wreathes its homes with garlands of fresh flowers,  
And drapes itself with beauty many-hued,  
To greet with fitting pomp the ruling prince ;  
So Nature, now, doth such a glory wear,  
As if prepared for some illustrious guest,  
As if expecting her great sovereign Lord ;  
And we who gaze in wonder on her grace,  
Do feel as though we scarce should know surprise,  
Were some celestial equipage to gleam  
Amid the leafage of yon fresh-leaved wood,  
And with effulgence brighter than the day,  
Pass with majestic pomp athwart the land !

“O Season of all Seasons the most fair !  
Wondrous revealer of Almighty Power !  
Wondrous revealer of all-perfect skill !  
Wondrous revealer of God’s heart of love !  
We gaze on thee and feel ourselves renewed,  
The angel of our childhood comes again,

And troubles the still waters of the soul,  
And makes them fresh and full of healing power.  
We lave, and lo! we issue forth new-born,  
Endowed with the fresh feeling of the child,  
Our heart the home of wonder and delight."

In words like these, and other such-like words,  
Our thoughts and feelings clothed themselves that morn.  
But ah! we felt how meanly clad they were,  
And that the best enshrinement speech can give  
To thought or feeling, oft is poor indeed—  
A beggar's raiment thrown about a queen.

From earliest morn, and on through all the day,  
With little intermission even at noon,  
The birds gave utterance to their love and joy  
In the most passionate strain. Not flusher were  
The fields with flowers than was the air with song.

We heard the cuckoo almost ceaselessly;  
Now, close and clear, the well-known sound broke forth,  
Half startling us, who but a trice before  
Had stood listening to one some fields away;  
And then, anon, one distant and one near,  
Shouting at once, like voice and echo seemed,  
Or like two children playing at bo-peep.

The larks sprang upward from about our feet,  
And, as they sprung, burst into ecstatic song,

And went to join their comrades in the skies.  
They sang as if in song they would dissolve,  
And sang as if they must sing so, or die,  
Making mid-air as gladsome as the grove ;  
So that we, sitting on a grassy knoll,  
Had music rising to us from the vale,  
And music raining on us from the skies,  
And music all around us—everywhere ;  
Floating about us like the air we breathed,  
And falling on us freely as the light.

We met some children on their way to school,  
With hats and bonnets pranked with primrose flowers.  
Their talk was of the rabbits and the birds,  
And all the nests they knew of. And at times,  
They lingered, looking skyward, after larks,  
Which rose up close beside them, but were soon  
High up in air and lost to sight awhile,  
But never lost to hearing ; for their song  
Came rilling down in cascades of sweet sound,  
Like waters from a fount that never fails.  
When the lost speck came into sight again,  
There was a general shout of, "There he is!"  
And all stood with a finger pointing up.  
At length, a cuckoo, from a neighbouring copse,  
Gave forth his name in full sonorous voice,  
And the next moment the familiar sound  
Was uttered imitatively by them,  
And they ran on, with "Cuckoo" for their cry.

The school-house stood a field or two away;  
 No dusty streets environed it about,  
 No forge or factory grimed it with its smoke,  
 Or filled the air about it with harsh din.  
 It stood in quietude amid the fields,  
 And had for its near neighbours mighty woods.  
 It knew no sounds but what are country-born,  
 The rooks went cawing o'er it all day long,  
 It was familiar with the song of birds,  
 In through the open casement hummed the bee.  
 All through the year it heard the bleat of sheep,  
 And in the Spring, the bleating of the lamb.

O happy childhood of the country child,  
 When cared-for and well-taught ! I often wish  
 A childhood in the country had been mine.  
 I always feel the lack of it a loss.  
 I care not for the memories of towns.  
 To look adown the avenue of years,  
 And find a town the terminating view,  
 Makes early life attractiveless to me.  
 The friends I knew in childhood still are dear ;  
 But for the streets they lived in, I care not.

A country childhood is the ideal one.  
 It is to start in life, as our first sire,  
 With Eden for a home ; but, unlike him,  
 To quit it, hand in hand with Innocence,  
 Making remembrance of it a life-joy.

It is to leave behind us a dear shrine,  
Whither Thought, oftentimes, in after years,  
Loves, palmer-like, to go on pilgrimage.  
It is to lay up solace for life's close ;  
For age and childhood, though at life's extremes,  
Yet come together closely in the end.  
Life suffers syncopation in old age ;  
The noon is dropped, and evening blends with morn.  
The old man lives his childhood o'er again ;  
For Memory, prouder of her early gains,  
And more tenacious than of later ones,  
Beguiles him with sweet visions of his prime,  
Restores the home which as a child he knew,  
Spreads o'er him the blue sky his childhood saw—  
Purer than skies are now—and shows him scenes  
That wore a grace which scenes now never wear ;  
Puts in his hand some flowers his young hands plucked,  
Ah ! never since have flowers been half so fair !  
Recalls the haunts his feet so often trod,  
The path that ran companion to the brook,  
The high-hedged lanes that to the village led ;  
The woodland nooks where, like two sportive fawns,  
The light and shadow frisked among the fern ;  
The narrow pathway through the fields of corn,  
The pleasant places round about the mere,  
The bosky dingle with its clear, cool stream,  
The village green, hard by the village church,  
The gorse-bushed common, where the rabbits ran,  
And cotters' cows went browsing all about ;

And, here and there, long files of waddling geese,  
The wood that joined the common on one side,  
The fields which, elsewhere, sloped away from it,  
Through which, with many a bend, there flowed a beck,  
Which, in its journey through the meadow lands,  
By sudden turns, first this way and then that,  
Travelled the distance thrice—just in the way  
A playful child would be most prone to do.  
Memories like these brighten the days of eld,  
And turn life's winter into second spring,  
And make the darkening night seem like a dawn.

The children loitered on their way to school,  
And we too, loitered, looking after them,  
Finding our pleasure in beholding theirs;  
But when the school received them, we passed on.

The last time we had walked along that way,  
'Twas Autumn, and the sportsmen were abroad.  
The poet and the sportsman both are found  
Haunting the fields and woods; but, O, how far,  
How widely far asunder are their aims!  
The one looks kindly upon all that lives,  
And is made glad to see the creatures so.  
He moves among them, innocent as the light,  
And full of sweetness as a summer wind.  
He feels himself akin to all that breathes,  
And sorrows even for a suffering brute.

The other makes his advent in the woods,  
Like Death broke loose from God's supreme control ;  
Doing a work he has no mandate for,  
And winning pleasure by diffusing woe.  
Not innocent as the light roams he abroad,  
But deadly, as the lightning when it strikes.  
A vagrant lightning he that owns no law,  
Strikes and destroys, and fouls, not freshens, the air.  
Unlike the bolt of heaven, which may smite one,  
But scatters largess to the millions left,  
And slays a thousand deaths in causing one.

" Do unto others as ye would that they  
Should do to you," was said, to shield the brute  
As well as man. He who should treat mankind  
As men too often treat the harmless brute,  
Would by the general voice be called a fiend.

To gaze on happy life and to be pleased,  
Not at the sight of happiness enjoyed,  
But at the prospect of fine scope to kill ;  
To gloat on death, to boast of numbers slain,  
This, though the feeling of too many men,  
Is surely not what any man should feel.

This shaft is shot against that rage for sport,  
Which runs through every rank of social life,  
Prince, peer, and peasant, and all grades between.  
" Sport " meaning, persecution of the brute,  
For the mere pleasure persecution gives.

I speak not here of that divine decree  
Which gave man flesh for food. Nor do I speak  
Of that necessity there is to kill,  
Which often may arise from other cause.  
I only speak of killing as a "sport,"  
And that, say what you will, cannot be right.

The poet and the sportsman both are found  
Haunting the fields and woods, but not in Spring ;  
For then, sportsmen, as such, are under ban,  
And so, no scenes we traversed that spring day  
Were blurred by sight of those who only haunt  
The woods and fields, as Death the world, to kill.

We passed manorial homes, where clamorous rooks  
Seemed ever in the heat of fierce debate,  
As if they held perpetual parliament,  
And every rook had privilege to speak,  
And used it, to pour forth his flood of talk ;  
Afraid, if he did not give forth his "caw,"  
He might be looked on as a witless rook ;  
Forgetting, what some folk sometimes forget,  
That many a head is deemed the home of wit,  
Till the mouth opens, and out Folly flies,  
With all her retinue of empty sound ;  
Forgetting, what some folk sometimes forget,  
That Wisdom dwells with Silence half her days,  
And oft sits musing, stilly as a star,  
And mainly speaks, as stars shine, to give light ;

While Folly flies from Silence, as her foe,  
And must be prating everlastingly,  
As senseless, in her prating, as the hen  
Which lays no eggs, yet cackles all day long.

We sat, awhile, looking at their quaint ways,  
And listening to the hubbub which they made,  
Wheeling about their high-pitched, airy homes.  
And now and then, one issued from the rest  
And sped across the country, as if sent  
On some important mission far away ;  
And not infrequently, as on he flew,  
He uttered to himself the accustomed “Caw” ;  
As if afraid he might, perchance, forget  
The wording of the message which he bore ;  
Reminding us of child on errand sent,  
Who goes, repeating what he has to say.

We sought the woodlands as the noon drew near,  
And in the woods we spent the mid-day hours,  
Glad for a season, of their cooling shade ;  
But not as simple screens from noon-tide heat  
Do we regard the woods, for they are more ;  
And earth, stripped of them, like a comely maid  
Of all her wealth of wavy tresses shorn,  
Would lose, in losing them, her beauty's crown,  
And the rich foil of all her features fair.

We entered one, and far as we could see  
The woodland floor was all one bloom of blue,

So lushly lavish grew the hyacinths.  
We stood, like children, underneath the trees,  
And looked up through the greenery of leaves,  
And scarce could catch a glimpse of the blue sky.  
The natural order seemed inverted there ;  
It was, as if earth had given heaven her green,  
And heaven had, in exchange, given earth her blue.

We love the woods and lingered in them long,  
And when we left them, we were loth to leave ;  
We could have dallied there the longest day,  
And 'twould have been too short for our desire.

We have a touch of reverence for great trees,  
And in the woods we met with many such ;  
Beeches, and oaks, and elms, and here and there,  
The woods were darkened by old wizard yews,  
Whose short, thick boles looked damp and brown and  
bare,  
And brown and bare the ground beneath their shade.  
Great gloomful things, where all else seemed so glad,  
So showed the yews amid the green of Spring.

We went by several churches in the day ;  
And we were glad to think that England's Church,  
Conterminous with English territory,  
Leaves not one rood of land outside her pale,  
Nor one stray sheep without a shepherd's care.

God's blessing be upon thee, dear old Church !  
Thy temples are the glory of our isle.  
They stand like beacons round about our coast,  
Guiding the mariner to his earthly port,  
And better still, to the blest port of heaven.  
And all our English landscapes owe a charm  
To massive tower, or lofty spire of thine.  
Thy minsters are the marvels of the land.  
Thy rural fanes wear such a reverend grace,  
That worship seems a double privilege there.  
Centres round which cluster the hamlet homes,  
Upon the village apex, there they stand ;  
As if to teach the rustics to aspire,  
As if to teach them that to enter there,  
Is to be nigher heaven—body and soul !

Thy service, with its matchless liturgy,  
Wins favour even from thy bitterest foes,  
Fervent, chaste, simple, reverent, and sublime ;  
Responsive now, and now uniting all  
In simultaneous bursts of praise and prayer.  
Fit utterance for myriads when they meet,  
Fit utterance also for the two or three ;  
Suited to vast cathedrals filled with crowds,  
And to the humblest fanes were few resort.  
Thy parsonage homes, sprinkled o'er all the land,  
Are sources of best social influence,  
And lift life round them to a higher plane.

Thy priesthood is pre-eminent. In all fields,  
Men serving at thine altars have won fame :  
The annals of the past shine with their names.  
Nor need the present pale before the past ;  
To-day, thy priesthood yields the palm to none  
In culture, learning, piety, and zeal ;  
In all that makes the Christian and the man,  
It holds, as erst, a clear pre-eminence.

God's blessing be upon thee, dear old Church !  
As children love their mother, we love thee.  
We breathe no prayer, but in it is thy name ;  
We have no hope which centres not in thee ;  
No aspiration, but is for thy weal ;  
Nor any aim apart from thee and thine.  
To be accounted worthy to serve thee,  
Is the one honour which we value most.  
A thousand years, thou hast been what thou art—  
The nation's Church,—and when a thousand more  
Have sped away, may'st thou be still the same.  
From age to age, lead thou the people on,  
Inspiring all with love of all things good ;  
Welding all classes into one great guild  
Of Christian brotherhood, each joined to each  
By love of thee, and love supreme to Christ.

Sometimes there comes a day which dawns and dies  
Without the shadow of a cloud in heaven ;  
And days of such sort are deemed beautiful.

And so they are, but not supremely so ;  
Such days resemble a symmetric face,  
Fine, as to features, but expressionless,  
And therefore lacking those diviner charms  
Which spring from feeling, and add grace to grace.

The day I think of as the ideal one,  
Must have a sky which is distinctly blue.  
Varied with clouds whose bounds are well-defined,  
With seas of azure stretching far between ;  
Clouds, white as any Alp clad with fresh snows,  
And soft to look on as the lightest foam,  
And lying on the sky bossy and bold ;  
Not hurrying o'er the welkin as if driven,  
But moving on, with such a stately calm,  
That we can say they move, and that is all.

As one who treads the tessellated floor  
Of some cathedral often looks on it,  
Yet doth as often lift admiring eyes  
To the fine-fretted, lofty-vaulted roof.  
So, we were not oblivious of the sky,  
The wondrous canopy which ceils the world.  
Its everlasting beauty was to us  
The theme of frequent converse ; and sometimes  
We sat and watched its changeful scenery,  
Not unamused to see the clouds assume  
The appearances of many things on earth,  
Then lose the appearance even while we looked ;

As though some unseen angel of the air  
Wrought semblances of what he saw below,  
And then defaced the semblance soon as wrought.  
Behold, a lion couchant on the blue,  
Colossal as to size, and fit to be  
The forest king of some Titanic world.  
While we admire the grandeur of the beast,  
Lo ! it collapses into shapeless cloud.  
Or, an imperious charger paws the air,  
Like the white horse of the Apocalypse,  
Whose head and limbs fall from him as we gaze.  
Or castellated building is upreared,  
High-walled, and bastioned, and many-towered,  
Which soon resolves itself into a heap.

We noted, too, at times, where all seemed clear,  
A thin, white film would break from out the blue,  
Just show itself, and then subside again ;  
As if the placid ocean of the skies  
Had here and there been caught by whiffs of wind,  
And lifted into curling crests of foam.  
And now and then, we marked some little cloud  
Would sail the azure, as if self-impelled ;  
Slowly it moved across the stainless heaven,  
Like a white swan athwart a waveless lake.  
That grandest spectacle which the clouds present,  
Was not exhibited to our eyes that day,  
Though all have sometimes seen it. I mean that  
Which meets the vision, when the clouds put on

Their mighty, mountainous aspect, giving us  
A view of Switzerland without going there.  
As if, crowned with its everlasting snows,  
Some Alpine range, with all its myriad peaks,  
Had lost its hold of earth and sailed through heaven.

For me, the sky hath always had the charm  
Which consecrates the object of first love.  
I do remember how, while yet a child,  
I used to lie with face upturned to it,  
In ecstasy of dreamy blissfulness,  
And wish that I could lie and look all day.  
And when I was a denizen of the town,  
But caring little for aught towns can show,  
The sky was my enchantress. Oftentimes,  
When dull and sad, I paced the unloved streets,  
An upward glance at some bright break of blue,  
Shot through me such a sweet, inspiring thrill,  
That I was half etherealized by it.  
A face of angel-beauty, looking down  
And smiling love, could not have thrilled me more,  
Or made me more forgetful of all else,

Far in the afternoon we reached a church,  
And entered the churchyard, admiring much  
The fine old pile and pleasant burial-ground.  
We walked about among the well-kept graves,  
Reading the names and ages of the dead ;  
Nor did the occupation damp our joy.

So sweet a peace pervaded all the place,  
So pure a light fell on the sacred sod,  
So fair a sky hung over us and it,  
So cheerful the whole aspect of the spot,  
That there, the grave seemed free from any gloom,  
And death itself a thing we could not dread.

The present often doth recall the past;  
It happened so to me that afternoon,  
And unto my companion thus I spoke:—

“ How like this village churchyard is to one  
I know elsewhere, where lies an early friend.  
Here let us rest awhile, and, as we rest  
Beneath these shadowing elms, let me revive  
The memory of my friend, by telling thee  
A few things touching him and his last days.

“ Death came to him, wearing consumption’s guise.  
While yet he trode the flower-flushed border land,  
Where youth and manhood meet, he passed away.  
No common soul went from us when he died.  
That subtle something—whatsoe’er it be—  
Which men call genius, God had given to him.  
The rich, rare nature of the poet his;  
Rich in emotional treasure, rich in love,  
And rich in sympathy with all that is.  
The beautiful was his perpetual quest,  
And when he found it, how he thrilled with joy!

And his eye found it almost everywhere.  
A bridegroom he, with beauty for his bride.  
O happy bride whom bridegroom loveth so !  
Nor was he less entrapt by the sublime ;  
Aught that was grand in sight, sound, thought, or act,  
Had a strange power to hold his soul in thrall ;  
Sometimes he stood, as utterly entranced,  
Telling his feelings only by a tear,  
Dumb-smitten by a sense of the sublime.

“A little thorp, wood-screened from wintry winds,  
But open to the soft breath of the south,  
And through all seasons open to the sun,  
There was his home. A hamlet fair to see,  
Where Spring weaves her first coronal of flowers,  
And Summer weaves her last. A quiet spot,  
Thrown off from the great highway of the world,  
It hears few sounds, and scarce knows any change,  
But such as seasons bring from year to year.

“Prolonged exposure, on a cold, wet day  
In early winter, laid him first aside ;  
And after that he sickened till the Spring,  
And when the May whitened the hedge-rows, died.

“I saw him much the last months of his life.  
He knew that he should die, and was resigned,  
And with a cheerful calmness spoke of death.  
And sometimes, too, he spoke of what had been

His aims, and hopes, and feelings in the past.  
To tell thee all my memory retains  
Of what he said, would hold us here too long,  
Let, therefore, a few utterances suffice.

“‘I thought,’ said he, ‘to live a longer life ;  
To die so early, at the first seemed hard.  
To feel life passing ere life reach its prime,  
To say, ‘adieu’ to all the dreams of youth,  
And all the hopes that mingle with youth’s dreams ;  
To wave ‘farewell’ to this fair earth and sky,  
And all the thousand scenes I know so well ;  
To pass from earth, leaving on earth no name,  
To breathe a last ‘Good-bye’ to those whose love  
Hath, like an angel-guard, watched over me,  
And know that no repayment can be mine ;  
All this, at first, made Death seem hard to me.  
But I have reached another mood than this,  
A nobler and a better, and Death now  
Wears not a foeman’s aspect, but a friend’s.  
Thanks be to God, the victory is mine  
By His good gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord !

“‘I cannot lose by death ; death must be gain.  
Where Christ is, there it must be best to be ;  
To see His glory, and to share in it,  
This is the highest bliss the soul can know.  
Poor worms at best on this side of the grave ;  
But, on the other, O, the wondrous change !

We pass from earth to soar, and not to sink,  
And find ourselves upon a higher plane,  
Where our ennobled powers find nobler use.

“ ‘Like Joseph, in the prison, here we are ;  
And Death, the messenger sent by the King  
To summon us to court. We are but stripped  
Of the mean vestments of mortality,  
That so we may be clothed upon with life,  
And be made meet to stand before the King.

“ ‘To die is not to fall from off life’s tree,  
Like a frost-bitten blossom, in the dust,  
Leaving no germ to ripen into fruit.  
It is to be transplanted from this soil,  
Which, at the best, yields faulty fruits and flowers,  
Into the palace garden of the King,  
Where every plant develops perfect flowers,  
And every bloom matures to perfect fruit.

“ ‘Death is the porter at the gate of life.  
Why think we, then, of death as our dread foe ?  
We sigh for freedom, yet we hug our chains ;  
We long for light, yet dare not leave the dark.  
To be immortal is our highest hope,  
Our greatest fear, to put the mortal off ;  
We cling to earth, as though earth were a heaven,  
And shrink from heaven, as though ’t were this poor  
earth.

“‘ To reach a state where there shall be no sin,  
 To be disburthened of this painful flesh,  
 With all its humbling, sad necessities ;  
 To reach the angels’ heaven, and be their peer  
 In deathlessness of nature and in bliss ;  
 To be, like them, free of the universe ;  
 To have the book of knowledge opened wide,  
 And all eternity to read it in ;  
 To see the heart of all those mysteries  
 Which now so baffle and bewilder us,  
 And, with an awful darkness, shut us in ;  
 To find all that which seems discordant now,  
 Resolving into perfect harmony ;  
 To see all evil effloresce in good,  
 And sorrow’s root crowned with the flowers of joy :  
 This cannot but be a most wondrous gain.

“‘ Earth hath sweet voices ; but they oft are blent  
 With sorrow’s bitter wail. Her scenes are fair ;  
 But ah ! how often seen through sorrow’s tears !

“‘ Joy visits earth, as from another sphere,  
 And, swallow-like, is but a summer guest.  
 Not so with sorrow. Earth is her abode ;  
 And, as the sparrow builds beneath all eaves,  
 So she is never far from human homes.

“‘ So full of change and all uncertainty,  
 Is this poor earthly, fugitive life of ours,

That every banquet chamber of our bliss  
Is haunted by the spectral form of Fear,  
And in our hand trembles the cup of joy.

“ Yet Earth is very fair. She wears a dower  
Of wondrous loveliness ; and unto me  
Her beauty hath been life’s supremest charm ;  
For the deep yearning of my soul hath been  
For beauty, and that which I have yearned for,  
In the fair face of Nature I have found.

“ My joy hath never been where crowds resort,  
But rather where sweet Nature dwells alone,  
And not a sound is heard except her voice,  
Unless, perchance, the sweet voice of a friend,  
Who, of a kindred soul, walked with me there.  
So walking, oft a sense of solemn awe  
Came down upon us, and we felt as though  
The place we trod was holy, and as though  
A presence was about us which might break,  
At any moment, as with lightning flash,  
The seal of the unseen, and stand revealed  
By some august, unprecedented sign.  
And often, too, a sweet ecstatic thrill  
Made all our being vibrate as with bliss.  
And at such times, to our so reverent love,  
Nature her loveliest lineaments disclosed,  
And made us wise in her unwritten lore.

“‘Yes, Earth is very fair ; and, as of old,  
Above her bends the heaven of Eden yet.  
How beautiful the all-embracing sky !  
How fresh and fadeless the eternal blue !  
How various its garniture of cloud !  
How grand the gloom of the black thunder-piles !  
How splendid in their whiteness those vast heaps  
Which look like wandering Arctic continents !  
And how distained with all divinest hues  
The masses which do muster when day dies !

“‘O wondrous revelation of the night,  
And the bright breaking of a Summer morn !  
O pomp of seasons, as they yearly pass !  
O miracle of freshness, the sweet Spring !  
O splendour of the long-drawn Summer days !  
O golden calm of brooding Autumn time !  
O vision of the pure, when Winter comes,  
And shames all other whiteness with his snows !

“‘Yet, fair though Earth be, fairer still is Heaven.  
God hath not here exhausted all His skill,  
Nor put forth all the greatness of His power ;  
Nor hath He here enshrined His highest thought  
Of grandeur in the grandeur that we see,  
Or beauty, in the beauty we admire.  
Earth, as compared with our eternal home,  
Is but the shadow of good things to come,

And not the very image of the things.  
Yea, earthly things foreshadow what shall be  
Far faintlier than the dawn foreshadows day,  
Or Autumn buds foreshadow coming Spring.

“‘ Into what forms of grandeur, or of grace,  
Material elements may there be cast,  
Or with what splendour blazoned, who shall say?  
What we ourselves shall be, we know not yet.  
But this we know, a wondrous change shall pass  
Alike both o'er our persons and our powers,  
Making both meeter for the heavenly home.  
It may be we shall need, and find, new powers,  
New modes of intercourse, and senses new,  
Wherewith to apprehend the spiritual,  
And to appreciate what we apprehend.  
For matter there shall be so subtilized,  
So spiritual in its essence, so refined,  
That, were a mortal placed in such a world,  
His poor, dull senses might perceive it not,  
Or, by the excess of glory, blasted be.

“‘ The loveliest flower is but transmuted mould,  
So wondrously God works with gross things here.  
But there, the elements, no longer gross,  
Shall be transmuted into things more fair  
Than words can say, or we can dream of yet.

“‘ And beauty, other than material, there  
Shall meet our craving for the beautiful

Completerlier than material beauty can.  
 For there the soul, quickened through all her powers,  
 And freed from all obtuseness of the flesh,  
 Shall see the spiritual, as she is seen,  
 And know it, too, as she herself is known.  
 Beauty, to which she is as yet half blind,  
 Shall fix her rapturous gaze upon her God,  
 And win her wonder through eternity,  
 Wonder that shall wax greater evermore,  
 The more she knows of Him the Infinite !

“ ‘ The Spring is come again ; but not for me.  
 Mine olden haunts shall know me nevermore.  
 I vanish from beneath these brightening skies,  
 And from amid earth’s fair, but fleeting Spring,  
 As utterly as though I had not been.  
 And yet, I sorrow not that this shall be ;  
 The universe is God’s. I do but change  
 These skies, whose blue is fickle as earth’s bliss,  
 For skies in which storms never brood, nor break,  
 But bend o’er all bright as a smile of God.  
 I do but change earth’s fair, but fleeting Spring,  
 Which, like a flash of splendour, comes and goes,  
 For a still fairer Spring, which, angel-like,  
 Doth never lose the freshness of its prime.

“ ‘ And now, farewell, belovèd friends, farewell !  
 God only can reward you for the love  
 Which ye have shown to me. He can and will.

Never shall I forget your tender care.  
The sweet remembrance of it cannot die.  
It is a part of my immortal self,  
And shall go with me undestroyed by death.  
Memory shall take it, as a flower from earth,  
And keep it ever fresh by dews of heaven.  
Let not your hearts be troubled about me ;  
Rather rejoice, and be exceeding glad ;  
For I am changing darkness for the light,  
And leaving Sorrow's home for that of Joy ;  
Quitting a world where death o'ershadows all,  
For the bright world where death shall be no more.  
We part but for a while. Souls one in Christ  
Cannot be severed long. Death here disjoins,  
But cannot bar reunion in the skies.

“ ‘ Make no great mourning over me when dead,  
And in the village churchyard bury me ;  
Not in a grave walled in by brick, or stone,  
But in a simple grave of common earth.  
For I would nestle closely to the breast  
Of the dear Earth which I have loved so well,  
And so, like wearied child, sleep my long sleep.  
And let the green grass grow upon my grave,  
And make the daisies welcome, if they come ;  
And if ye make it beautiful with flowers,  
Go not to gardens only for the flowers,  
But fetch them, too, from lanes and fields and woods ;  
For Nature’s nurslings, the sweet wilding flowers,

Have all my days been dear delights to me.  
Yes, in the village churchyard bury me,  
But not beneath the yew-tree's gloomful shade,  
For I desire no gloom about my grave.  
And yet, not treeless would I have the place,  
For I have always loved the Titan trees,  
And would not have them far even from my grave.  
Hard by that line of limes, which runs along  
Behind the chancel of the village church,  
There, choose a spot for me, and lay me there.

“ ‘I see the sun is setting. Lift the blind,  
And let the glory freely flood the room.  
'T is the last sunset I shall see on earth,  
And I would see this one before I die.  
Ah ! it is very lovely, is it not ?  
The outgoing of the evening doth rejoice,  
God maketh it so very beautiful.’

“ These were almost the last words that he said ;  
That prescience which the dying often show,  
Seemed to inspire this final utterance.  
He lay all night, as dead to all things here,  
With lips that moved, at times, as if in prayer,  
And eyes that seemed to see what we saw not,  
And when the east was brightening with the dawn,  
He murmured, ‘ Jesus, Jesus ! ’ and then died.”

"These fragments of the talk of my young friend,  
During the closing days of his short life,  
Are all that time permits me now to give ;  
For see ! the shadows lengthen on the sward,  
And tell us eve approaches. It is time  
We journeyed homeward with less lingering feet."  
And then, we left the church and the churchyard,  
And the long shadows lying on the graves,  
And without other tarrying walked towards home,  
Except that, twice or thrice, we stood to look  
At the magnificent colouring of the west.

Eve, full of pity for the dying Day,  
Wove a rich shroud of purple and of gold,  
And wrapped the dead Day in it, saying thus :  
"He who, when living, silver raiment wore,  
Shall, being dead, be folded thus in gold.  
It is not meet that he who lived a king,  
Should die and not be laid in robe of state."  
And so she wrapped him in that sumptuous shroud,  
And we stood wondering at the spectacle.

Just as the first stars showed themselves in heaven,  
We clicked the Vicarage gate, and were at home.

Our home is not in Eden ; but it hath  
Some sweets of Eden in it.

It is like  
A town-grown rose with smoke-smutched outer leaves,  
But, in its innermost heart, daintily pure

As any sister rose, that blushing blooms  
Beside some country home in country air.  
Peace at the portal stands, and keeps out Strife  
And all the venomous brood of Discord born.  
Mirth often comes and sits with us at meals ;  
And sometimes Wit—although we take no wine—  
Comes in with Mirth, and sits down with us too,  
And shoots his shining shafts about the board ;  
And Cheerfulness is our abiding guest ;  
And Love hath made with us her lasting home.  
Nor is Religion absent. Over all  
She breathes her inspiration. Vestal-like,  
She stands beside an altar reared to God,  
Her holy work to feed the sacred flame  
Which on its top for ever glows and twires.  
And duly, morn and eve, we gather round,  
And there present our praises and our prayer.  
Nor did we fail in this that eventide.  
We make no record of our humble prayer ;  
But here we give our grateful hymn of praise.

## HYMN.

Great Cause of all ! Our Father and our God !  
Deign to accept the grateful hymn of praise  
We offer unto Thee this eventide.  
Under the roof which Thou hast reared for us  
We gladly rear an altar unto Thee ;

Where, with due rites, each morning and each eve  
Finds us presenting mingled praise and prayer.  
This day hath been to us a special day,  
And asks from us a special hymn of praise.  
Accept it, Lord, for it is from our hearts,  
And is presented in the name of Christ,  
And with beseechings for Thy Spirit's aid,  
To make our praises holily complete.

We thank Thee, Lord, for this sweet springtide day,  
And for the joy which we have found in it.  
Our hearts were glad when we went forth at morn,  
In prospect of the pleasures of the day ;  
And now, at eventide, we render thanks  
For morning prospects bounteously fulfilled.

Once more, great Lord, Thou hast made all things new,  
Sent forth Thy Spirit, and infused new life,  
And from the withered chrysalis of earth  
Summoned celestial beauty to come forth ;  
And at the summons, lo ! she comes, the Spring !

We thank Thee for the Spring, for she is Thine,  
And owes her life and loveliness to Thee,  
The fairest of the seasons, and the first.  
Thou dowerest her with every maiden grace,  
And makest her exceeding beautiful,  
And leadst her forth, to glad the weary eyes,  
And reinvigorate the weary hearts  
Of us poor mortals in this world of care.

We thank Thee for the beauty of the Spring,  
And for the general joy the Spring inspires ;  
A joy that thrills the lowliest things that live,  
And is expressed in its own way by each :  
Some, by their movements, tell how glad they are ;  
Some, by the sounds they make, express their joy ;  
The fields, the woods, the streams, and the warm air,  
Are full of creatures that keep jubilee.

We thank Thee for the joy the brute things show,  
And also for the joy Spring brings to man.  
How gleesome now the little children are !  
How they do run a-field and crop the flowers,  
And shout, and sing, and dance the day away !  
And the dear sick, long bound to hearth and home,  
Come forth with hearts a-flutter with their joy,  
And feel the genial influence of the time.  
And joy comes back to the withered heart of age,  
When the dark skirts of Winter disappear,  
And gentle Spring resumes her glorious reign.  
All people hail her advent with delight,  
And feel life's burden lightened by her smile ;  
Winter's drear days lose half their dreariness,  
Because the sombre avenue they make  
Ends in the vision of her loveliness.  
To some, ere reached, she is a sovereign hope,  
And when attained, a most imperial joy ;  
When gone, a dream that brightens duller days,  
A reminiscence that is very sweet.

We thank Thee for the Spring, for she renews  
That proof of Thine unfailing faithfulness  
Which every seed-time brings ; assuring us  
That, as this ancient promise never fails,  
So every word of Thine shall be fulfilled ;  
That all Thy promises are buds whereout  
Shall break fulfilment's flower, dawns out of which  
There shall not fail to come the perfect day.

We thank Thee, Lord, but not for Spring alone,  
But for all seasons, for they all are Thine,  
And, in a thousand ways we wot not of,  
They work our weal, in working out Thy will.  
With all his storms, no whit the less than Spring,  
Winter is love, though in another dress,  
And reaching the same end by different means.

But not for seasons only, but for all  
That glorifies or gladdens night or day,  
We render thanks to Thee, the Source of all.  
We thank Thee for the beauty which is born  
When morning breaks ; and for the glorious light,  
Which, like Thine own bright presence, fills the day,  
And makes earth radiant as a court of heaven ;  
And for the glory that comes with the eve.  
We thank Thee, too, for night, the wondrous night,  
More wondrous far than is the wondrous day ;  
We thank Thee for the night, the wondrous night,  
Whom Thou hast made so lovely, yet so dread,

The marvel of the child and of the man;  
The mystery of the savage and the sage;  
The great revealer of infinity;  
Discoverer of the multitudinous worlds;  
Proclaimer of Thy presence and Thy power,  
Thy wisdom, and Thy being's boundlessness;  
The orator who takes Thee as his theme,  
And, with a power with which none may compete,  
Through all the star-lit hours Thy glory shows.  
We thank Thee for the day, the day is Thine,  
And for the night, the night is also Thine.

We would not close our grateful hymn of praise,  
Leaving unmentioned Thy redeeming love.  
Were our lips dumb, the stones would straight cry out  
For, more than stars to night, or sun to day,  
Or verdure to the Spring, is it to us.  
We cannot, Lord, nor would we, if we could,  
Forget the all-immeasurable love  
Which Thou hast shown to our poor, sinful race,  
In that Thou didst not even withhold Thy Son,  
But gav'st Him up so freely for us all.  
And all our powers go forth in thanks to Thee,  
O Saviour Christ! we glory in Thy cross;  
For, without it, the bright day would have seemed  
The jeering laugh of Nature at our woes;  
And the dark, moonless mystery of Night,  
The scowl of all Creation at our sin.  
Yea, without it, life would have been a woe,

And earth the unblest home of hopeless souls.  
To us poor sinful ones, the Spring is fair,  
The Summer bright, the Autumn full of cheer,  
And Winter crowned with joy, only because  
Earth's pathways have been trodden by Thy feet,  
And Thou hast tasted death for every man.  
Thou wouldest not stay in heaven to see us die.  
Infinity was traversed, Lord, by Thee,  
When, travelling in the greatness of Thy strength,  
And in the greater greatness of Thy love,  
Thou camest full of pity us to save.  
Creation is transfigured by Thy Cross ;  
Seen in its light, all seasons and all scenes  
Wear but one aspect, and that aspect, love.

And Thou, Eternal Spirit, who dost come  
In the bright track of love—Thyself all love—  
Yearning to make our human hearts Thy home,  
And win them back to goodness and to God,  
And mould them into meetness for the skies ;  
Renewing them as Thou renewest earth,  
Breathing the breath of a new life within,  
And changing the soul's Winter into Spring ;  
To Thee, and to the Father, and the Son,  
One only God, we render thanks for all.

## Prince Albert.

### THE DAY OF HIS BURIAL.

---

WHAT gives such quiet to our land to-day,  
And hushes all the sounds of labour so?  
For town and country, wander where we may,  
Do everywhere a Sabbath seeming show.

The windows of the houses all are dark :  
Is there some dead one in each cot and hall ?  
It is the merry Christmas-tide—but hark !  
No merry sound upon the ear doth fall.

But through the length and breadth of all the shires,  
A mournful, muffled knell troubles the air ;  
From city churches and from village spires  
The sound comes forth—we hear it everywhere.

It is as though each separate church to-day  
Had funerals from the homes that round it spread ;  
As though within each separate home there lay  
The pallid body of a dear one dead.

No common hap could bring all this about,  
    Stem business' tides, and labours' sounds hush so ;  
And from a people's homes the light shut out,  
    And robe a nation in the garb of woe.

What then hath softened so the nation's heart,  
    And so subdued a mighty nation's mien ?  
Ah, need we say, that Death's unlooked-for dart  
    Hath smitten down the Consort of the Queen ?

A prince by rank, but more by nature he,  
    Pure, noble, wise, without a moral stain ;  
Therefore the land bemoans him, as we see,  
    With unfeigned feeling, and with heartfelt pain.

The church, to-day, wide open throws her door,  
    That a bereavèd people may come in,  
And, kneeling down upon the holy floor,  
    Find some sure solace for the grief within.

Gather, O people, gather round the bier,  
    On which *he* lies, your noblest and your best ;  
Let grief have way, nor check the coming tear ;  
    Yet, in your sorrow, bow to Heaven's behest.

Come hither, young men, who, though young, revere  
    The noble dead who, in his student youth,  
Sought knowledge with a diligence severe,  
    And practised virtue, while pursuing truth.

Come hither, maidens, weep ye round his bier  
 Whose early manhood was so true and pure ;  
 Whose wooing words were as Love's own sincere,  
 And as Love's own inviolably sure.

Come hither, matrons, ye who know how dear  
 Is wedded life, when wedding vows are kept ;  
 Weep for the princely dead, for on this bier  
 Lies husband faithful as wife ever wept.

Come hither, fathers, he who lieth here  
 Left an example meet for every sire ;  
 His sceptre of home sway was love, not fear,  
 His children's moral good his first desire.

Come hither, statesmen, draw ye also near ;  
 For you to mourn the dead is meet and right ;  
 For he was skilled the commonwealth to steer,  
 In times of darkness, and in times of light.

Come hither, all of every age and sphere,  
 And mourn the prince gone from us in his prime ;  
 Let not the manliest blush to shed a tear ;  
 For tears do shame no eyes at such a time.

Gather, O people, gather round the bier  
 On which *he* lies, your noblest and your best ;  
 And pray that *she* to whom he was so dear,  
 May find in God heart-healing and heart-rest.

But just arrived at life's meridian stage,  
When all the powers of mind become mature ;  
Just grasping his high mission to the age,  
And how he best might noblest ends secure ;

And just beginning to receive his due  
Of that heart-homage, good men gladly pay .  
To noble minds that noble aims pursue ;  
A splendid future full before him lay.

Science inscribed his name in her bright roll,  
As head of her world-famous gatherings ;  
And Learning placed it high upon her scroll,  
'Mong names more honoured than the names of kings.

And Honour sought him, and on him bestowed  
All dignities that most illustrious are ;  
Her rarest badges on his bosom glowed,  
And in the midst shone the imperial star.

But ah ! a sudden tremor on me falls,  
And almost takes the breath from out my lips ;  
For lo ! Death enters Windsor's stately halls,  
And all the glory finds a swift eclipse.

Science, hadst thou no power to stay Death's dart ?  
And, Learning, couldst thou urge no saving plea ?  
And couldst thou not, O Honour, shield the heart  
That pulsed beneath thy robes of dignity ?

Alas ! how feeble Science is we see,  
How unavailing Learning's proud display,  
What tinsel baubles Honour's badges be,  
When Death treads on the scene and claims his prey !

The suddenness of the event we mourn,  
Hath made our great loss all the greater seem ;  
“The prince is dead,” were tiding to us borne,  
While yet of death we scarcely had a dream.

The fact that that home circle was entire,  
That it had never lost a member yet,  
Had made us feel as if a wall of fire  
For its protection had been round it set.

No flower, as yet, had withered in that wreath,  
No precious gem been lost from out that ring ;  
That home, as yet, unvisited by Death,  
Seemed fenced about as if a sacred thing.

And we did dream that as the past had been,  
So a long future would be as the past ;  
And that the happy household of the Queen  
Would long be sheltered from bereavement's blast.

With the festivities of Christmas-tide,  
The castle halls were soon to be made gay ;  
The brazen gates were soon to be thrown wide,  
To admit illustrious guests in state array.

And an illustrious, kingly guest did come,  
All uninvited, unexpected came ;  
Silent he passed within the lordly dome,  
None asked him, and to none he gave his name.

He came not in the cheerful morning light,  
Nor in the glow of evening did he come ;  
But in the dark, dead middle of the night,  
When all was shrouded, and when all was dumb.

No crested chariot, drawn by clattering steeds,  
To Windsor's regal towers, bears him along ;  
Though more than king, yet all alone he speeds,  
Unretinued by any vassal throng.

With movement, noiseless as the march of stars,  
Or shadow, as it sweeps along the floor,  
He passes on, impeded by no bars,  
And stands before the massive castle door.

The opening of the door he needs not wait,  
He lifts no knocker, and no bell he rings ;  
But passes inward to a room of state,  
Where, twice before, he had unsceptred kings.

His awful presence filled the place with gloom,  
None spake a word, but with low, bated breath ;  
And thou, O Prince, didst recognise thy doom,  
And know thy midnight visitor was Death !

And thou, O Wife, O Queen ! what woe was thine,  
When from thine Albert's lips surceased the breath,  
And the dread truth flashed on thee by that sign  
That he, the midnight visitor, was Death !

And you, ye princes and princesses, all  
Made fatherless by that surceasing breath,  
O ! bitterer than the wormwood and the gall,  
For you to know the visitor was Death !

Hither and thither, all the castle through,  
The tidings ran, uttered with broken breath,  
“The prince is dead !” alas, alas ! ’t is true,  
The midnight visitor who came was Death !

And o'er the sovereign city of the land,  
At midnight, boomed a knell which took men's breath ;  
For that great bell, the people understand,  
Knolls only to make known a royal death !

O the resistless might of that decree,  
By which the Eternal dooms man to the dust !  
For though all human skill exerted be,  
Yet, spite of all, return to earth we must.

And ah ! how fleeting, and how very vain,  
Are the best things which this world can bestow !  
Rank, honours, wealth—we cannot these retain,  
But, stripped of all, to the next world we go !

But he, O people, whom we mourn to-day,  
Though stripped of what was earthy and of earth,  
Hath but exchanged poor baubles made of clay  
For things that be of everlasting worth.

He bore one title, which he still doth bear—  
The highest title an archangel knows—  
“*Servant of Christ;*” and now, as such, doth wear  
The eternal dignities which Christ bestows.

Bear forth the body, lay it in the tomb,  
Let that which came from dust return to dust,  
Let earth, all that is of the earth resume,  
For God hath willed it, and His will is just.

What shall we say to thee, O widowed Queen,  
So lonely left in thy exalted state,  
Bereft of him on whom thy soul did lean,  
So wise in counsel, and withal so great?

A widowed Queen! erewhile the joyful wife  
Of prince as noble as Death ever slew;  
A lonely lot is thine henceforth for life,  
Lonely as Luna's in the heavenly blue.

A nation pleads with God in earnest prayer,  
For thee its widowed Queen, the nation prays,  
That strength be given thy stricken soul to bear  
The sorrow which hath darkened so thy days.

May the assurance of thy people's love,  
And the sweet memories of the dear one dead,  
And the good hope of meeting him above,  
Their soothing influence on thy spirit shed.

But more than all, may that sweet grace be thine  
Of resignation to the will of God,  
Which touches sorrow with a light divine,  
And takes the harshness from affliction's rod.

This is the true nepenthe—only this  
Can heal thy broken heart, and give it rest ;  
For Sorrow's self is seen to be veiled Bliss  
By those who feel that what God wills is best.

Here rest thee, then, beloved and honoured Queen,  
Till thou and he again united be ;  
Then shalt thou see how this great grief hath been  
Outworking everlasting good for thee.

## **P**salms cxlviii.

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PRAISE the Lord of earth and skies,  
Let His praise from all things rise.

First, ye Angels, ye who dwell  
Nighest Him the Ineffable ;  
Foremost of all creatures ye,  
Fairer than aught else can be,  
Angels, praise Him, let your lays  
Bear the burden of His praise.

Praise Him, Sun, great lord of day,  
Pour His praise in every ray ;  
Praise Him to the worlds that roll  
Round thee as their central soul ;  
Praise Him, as thou chasest Night  
Round the worlds which thou dost light ;  
Widely as thy glories fall,  
Praise Him, the Great Lord of all.

Praise Him, Moon, fair queen of night,  
Beam His praise in thy chaste light.  
Never constant to one phase,  
Be thou constant in His praise.  
Whether thou a crescent lie  
Silver-clear, in sapphire sky,  
Or in full-orbed splendour rise,  
Speak His praise to earth and skies.

Praise Him, all ye Stars that gleam,  
Making night the poet's dream ;  
Shoot His praise, ye orbs of light,  
Through the boundless infinite.

Praise Him, all ye Clouds that move  
O'er the bending blue above ;  
Whatsoever tints ye show,  
Vermeil, purple, gold, or snow ;  
Whatsoever form ye wear,  
As ye sail the sea of air,  
Nearing earth, or soaring high,  
Praise Him wheresoe'er ye fly.

Praise Him, all ye bubbling Springs,  
Where the wild bird preens its wings.

Praise Him, all ye little Rills,  
As ye hasten down the hills.

Praise Him, all ye wandering Brooks,  
Gurgle praise in all your nooks ;  
Praise Him to the sighing sedge,  
Praise Him to each flowery ledge.

Praise Him, Rivers, as ye roll  
Sea-ward, to your ocean goal ;  
Shout His praise to all the ships,  
From whose keel your water drips.

Praise Him, Ocean, let each shore  
Hear His praise in thy deep roar ;  
Let all tribes who on thee gaze,  
Hear thee utter forth His praise.

Praise Him in your giant glee,  
Mighty Monsters of the sea ;  
As ye sportive roll or sweep,  
Swift and strong along the deep.  
As ye plunge to depths profound,  
Everywhere His praises sound.

Praise Him, all ye Winds that blow,  
Breathe His praise where'er ye go ;  
Tell it out where'er ye be,  
Wandering over earth or sea.

On the stilly summer eves,  
When ye scarcely stir the leaves,  
When ye scarcely crimp the deep,  
As it lies like one asleep ;

Wheresoe'er your soft breath strays,  
Whisper to all things His praise.  
When ye wear your fiercer form,  
Turning stillness into storm,  
And, with wildest rush and roar,  
Chase the foam-white waves ashore ;  
Filling all the void of night  
With the voices of your might,  
Bowing down, as on ye pass,  
Forest trees like bents of grass ;  
Then, when all things own your sway,  
With His praise fill night and day.

Praise Him, Mountains, ye who stand  
Things of wonder in the land ;  
From your summits white with snow,  
Let His praises sounding go,  
Shout His praise to yonder sky,  
Shout until the sky reply,  
Shout until all earth about,  
Hill and valley join the shout.

Praise Him, all ye fruitful Trees,  
Standing in the sunny leas ;  
And in all your cloisters dim,  
~~Wood~~ and Forests, praise ye Him. •

Praise Him, all ye Flocks and Herds,  
Praise Him, all wild beasts and birds,

Praise Him, insects that have wings,  
Praise Him, all ye creeping things.

Praise the Lord of earth and skies,  
Let His praise from all things rise.

Praise Him, Princes, and ye Kings,  
Him, from whom all honour springs ;  
Praise Him in your crowned estate,  
Praise Him, He alone is great.

All ye People, everywhere,  
In all tongues His praise declare ;  
Let the mighty hymn arise,  
From all kindreds 'neath the skies.

Praise Him, both young Man and Maid,  
Ere your strength or beauty fade ;  
Ere your freshness go with time,  
Praise Him in your happy prime.

Praise Him, Old Men, let His praise  
Close the circle of your days ;  
Praise Him, and life's eve shall be  
Like its morn, a time of glee.

Praise Him; Children—happy things !  
Happy as the bird that sings,  
When ye learn, and when ye play,  
Praise Him, He is good alway.

Praise the Lord of earth and skies,  
Let His praise from all things rise.  
He is worthy, He alone  
Sitteth on creation's throne ;  
Far above all earthly fame  
Is the glory of His name ;  
Far above all heavenly height  
Is the glory of His might ;  
Far all creature thought above  
Is the greatness of His love.

## The Birth of Christ.

---

It was a glorious night, no cloudy bars  
Dimmed one bright orb in heaven's infinity ;  
Earth lay in silence, looking at the stars,  
As if struck dumb by the great mystery.

The shepherds were abiding in the field,  
And keeping watch over their flock by night ;  
About them all was dark and unrevealed,  
The stars alone were visible to sight.

When, lo ! a light fell on them where they lay,  
As in the twinkling of an eye it fell ;  
A light distinguished from the light of day,  
And purer than a mortal tongue can tell.

The shepherds straight uplooked, and, lo ! they saw  
In the mid-air the angel of the Lord.  
His presence smote them with so great an awe,  
That, as if dead, they sank upon the sward.

And then the angel spake. O for words meet  
To tell how soothingly God's angel spoke!  
His voice was tenderer far, and far more sweet,  
Then mother ever breathed, or music woke.

Bidding the trembling shepherds not to fear,  
He told the story of the Saviour's birth;  
How He was born in David's city near,  
The promised Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth!

"And this," said he, "shall be a sign, whereby  
To know the marvellous babe when Him ye see;  
Cradled within a manger He doth lie,  
And wrapped about with swaddling clothes is He."

Scarce had the last word left the angel's lips,  
When all the myriad stars that gemmed the night,  
Were, in a moment, lost in bright eclipse,  
By the full splendour which then burst to light.

For with the one lone angel, suddenly—  
As meteors gleam upon the starry blue—  
Bursting from their invisibility,  
A multitude of angels flashed to view.

At this the shepherds marvelled more and more,  
For now they heard a wondrous choral strain,  
Such as a mortal never heard before,  
And such as mortal shall not hear again.

No earthly harmony may hope to vie  
With the grand chords heard by the shepherds then;  
When angels sang, "Glory to God on high,  
On earth be peace, and good will unto men."

The heaven-born chorus ceased, and all was still,  
The burst of matchless music died away;  
An utter silence spread o'er vale and hill,  
And the rapt shepherds, as if listening, lay.

The multitude of angels passed from sight,  
The trail of their departing failed in space;  
And as, erewhile, in the blue vault of night,  
The stars were seen, each shining in its place.

It was a glorious night, no cloudy bars  
Dimmed one bright orb in heaven's infinity;  
Earth lay in silence, looking at the stars,  
As if struck dumb by the great mystery.

## The Death of Death.

---

A DREAM came to me in the darksome night :  
Upborne by some strange power, I passed from earth,  
And from all sights and sounds, of mortal birth ;  
Longtime I seemed to be drawn on through space,  
Upheld by some unseen Almighty Grace,  
Through solitudes where all was dark and dread,  
Where was no light, and whence all life had fled.  
When, lo ! afar, I saw a wondrous light,  
Which, as I neared it, grew a city bright ;  
Its gates were pearl, of jasper were its walls,  
And of pure gold its happy homes and halls ;  
It was not lit by either sun or moon,  
And yet it basked in more than seven-fold noon ;  
The light that crowned it was diviner far,  
Than that which falls from sun, or moon, or star.

I stood, all wonder, looking on the sight,  
When swiftly by me a dread phantom swept ;

It seemed a shadow, yet a shape it seemed,  
And as it passed, a horror o'er me crept.  
It seemed a shape, but what the shape might be,  
I cannot tell; words fail me utterly,  
When I attempt to clear that mystery,  
And limn the shapeless shape of which I dreamed!

When it had passed, scarce had I breathed a breath  
When something in me whispered, "That is Death!"  
I almost died to think that Death was there,  
To mar the splendour of a realm so fair;  
Black as embodied darkness on he went,  
Like thunder-cloud across the firmament,  
The monster's presence did my heart appal;  
I watched his flight, and soon I saw him fall,  
And move along beside the jewelled jasper wall;  
And, as he went, a gloom like that of hell  
Went with him, darkening all on which it fell;  
Sure never, until then, did human eyes  
See gloom and glory wedded in such wise;  
Such holy light shot through by such a shade,  
Such brightness by such luridness o'erlaid.

The nearest gate was open, but not far,  
And—shuddering sight!—Death sought to steal within.  
Just then, a seraph, bright as seraphs are,  
Threw wide the gate, and seized the Son of Sin.  
The ghastly phantom shrieked, but could not fly.  
Ah, never heard I such unearthly cry;

It seemed not loud, and yet it shook the air,  
As if ten thousand clarions gave their blare :  
It was the wild, weird cry of Death's despair !  
" Give me thy dart," the seraph said, " and die."  
" There shall be no more death, our God hath said."  
With that he smote him, and lo ! Death lay dead.

And then, methought, sweet harpings filled the sky,  
And, like the light for swiftness, seraphs flew  
From star to star, to tell that Death was dead ;  
And in short space, so borne, the news had sped  
To all the worlds that death was ever in ;  
And then, O joy ! what gladness did begin !  
From every star there burst exulting song  
And shoutings, which in volume vaster grew,  
As through the infinite space they poured along :  
Star shouted unto star, " Our God hath said,  
There shall be no more death, and Death is dead ! "

## The Destruction of Sodom.

---

IT is the evening of a sultry day,  
And summer, with her fulness, clothes the scene ;  
From break of morn, through all his heavenly way,  
The sun hath met no cloud to shade his sheen,  
One stainless stretch of blue the sky hath been.  
But now the west is burning with the glow  
Of sunset, and the Jordan vale is seen  
Flushed with that light which doth from sunset flow,  
And makes the beautiful a double beauty show.

O, glorious is the scene on which we gaze !  
It is a land which God hath greatly blest,  
Its beauty all beholders doth amaze ;  
All gifts of grace are by that land possest,  
One of earth's fairest spots it stands confest ;  
Richly adornèd, like an eastern bride  
Arrayed for bridal, that land seemeth drest ;  
And lucid streams, soft murmuring as they glide,  
Through all the lovely vale pour their perennial tide.

The palm shoots there its shapely shaft on high ;  
Like a fair column crowned with leaves it looks ;  
There groves of oak and olive meet the eye,  
And wilding flowers flush all the fields and nooks ;  
The willows there bend o'er the babbling brooks,  
As if to catch their babbling, all day long ;  
There the swart reapers rear the golden stooks,  
And the grape-gatherers fill the land with song  
And joyous shouts, that come both from the old and young.

Ah me ! that that fair land should be the home  
Of men so vile as those who dwell therein ;  
For viler never dwelt beneath yon dome  
That spreads o'er all of human kith and kin.  
Heaven's verdict is, " Most grievous is their sin :  
Sinners they are who sin exceedingly."  
Beauty is round them ; but their souls within  
Are foul and festering with impurity,  
With strange, unnatural lusts that may not namèd be.

The cry of their great sin hath scaled the skies,  
And even Mercy says, " Let vengeance be."  
And vengeance comes ; for ere to-morrow flies,  
Destruction shall come down on all we see,  
Blasting for ever that fair scenery,  
And all the impious, wretched souls who dwell  
In Sodom, and her neighbour cities three.  
Vengeance shall come, and, wildly fierce and fell,  
Turn all the beauteous vale into one burning hell.

Never again, as now, shall setting sun  
Steep in his light those cities and that scene ;  
For ere again his western goal be won,  
Cities and scene shall be things which have been,  
But are no more. Unconscious all I ween  
Are yonder cities of their hastening doom.

There are no signals from which they may glean  
Tidings of coming wrath, no portents loom,  
Nor yet do lightnings flash, nor threatening thunders boom.

The wind doth not, in fitful furious sweeps,  
Dash down the trees, then instant die away ;  
Nor doth the sun flash flame with sudden leaps,  
And then as suddenly withhold the day ;  
The sky doth not its blueness cast away,  
Then show itself all blackness, streaked with fire ;  
The earth doth not with sudden joltings sway,  
From out the air there come no wailings dire,  
Nor dark, prophetic words that tell of God's great ire.

Creation keeps the secret of her God,  
And wears her usual summer-evening smile :  
The trees stretch their long shadows on the sod,  
Like weary giants who seek rest awhile ;  
And in the west one solitary pile  
Of ambercloud sails up the glorious sky,  
And as it sails looks like a floating isle.  
From all we see below, around, on high,  
Doth it not seem a dream to think destruction nigh ?

Yet signs there are, enough to waken dread,  
Were they not closely veiled from human eyes;  
Two travellers now the path to Sodom tread,  
Glorious immortals veiled in mortal guise;  
And their great Lord, the Lord of earth and skies,  
Hath just left Abraham where now he stands,  
Down-looking on the vale in dumb surprise,  
With trembling heart and claspèd praying hands;  
For God hath shown to him the doom of those fair lands !

The travellers now have reached the city gate;  
And, as is wont at this cool hour of day,  
The city is astir. Both small and great  
Have issued from their homes, and all is gay.  
Pride moves in state along the spacious way,  
In all the pomp of orient pageantry;  
And pampered luxury fails not to display  
Both her abundance and her villainy,  
And idle crowds look on approving all they see.

Lot sees the travellers as they reach the gate,  
And, rising from his seat, he meets them there,  
And bows himself with patriarchal state,  
And with entreaty urges them to share  
His dwelling for the night; but they declare  
That in the street all night they will abide.  
He urges still, and they at length repair  
With him, while yet 'tis early eventide,  
Unto his home, to be the guests of him their guide.

Not far have they to go before they gain  
The kindly shelter and the place of rest ;  
And Lot commands a fatling to be slain,  
And water brought, to wash each way-worn guest ;  
The fatling, slain, is soon prepared and drest,  
And a rich feast is spread before the sight.  
The strangers eat as though by hunger prest.  
In the meanwhile, the golden sunset light  
Hath darkened in the heavens, and now 't is starry night.

It is indeed a myriad-starrèd night,  
Fit night to follow that resplendent day ;  
A night that breathes of mystery and might  
To mortals gazing on the bright display  
Which spreads o'er all in infinite array.  
And such a night now spreads o'er Jordan's vale,  
A night to win the soul from sin away.  
Alas ! it is not so, or this sad tale  
Of Sodom's sin and doom had never made us quail.

For ere Lot and his guests lie down to sleep,  
The impious citizens the house surround ;  
And with unholy clamour, loud and deep,  
And strange demands, they make the night resound.  
Their shameless cries all decency confound.  
Sure never yet did yonder starry skies  
Gleam down on viler men than those who round  
The patriarch's home now utter their foul cries ;  
So foul, one almost thinks they must from fiends arise.

The patriarch, fearing for his guests, goes out,  
And pleads the claims of hospitality ;  
And, reasoning with the sensual, godless rout,  
Says, " Brethren, pray do not so wickedly."  
At this they rage the more infuriately,  
And, fiercely scowling, all cry out, " Away !  
Thou, though a stranger, wouldest be judge ; with thee  
We will deal worse than them ; away, away !"  
Then sorely hustling Lot, more wildly cry, " Away ! "

The patriarch's perilous plight his two guests see ;  
But, all unmoved, they show no sign of fear ;  
A marble calmness, from all passion free,  
Though dangers worse than death approach so near,  
Stamps them as beings of another sphere,  
Though only men they seem to mortal sight.  
But now, to save their host, they interfere,  
Draw him within, and shut the door, then smite  
The lawless mob without with blindness black as night.

And there they now grope blindly for the door,  
Baffled, and burning with foul lust, they grope ;  
They grope, but they shall find it nevermore ;  
But, ah ! instead they find the awful slope  
That leads straight down to hell ; for, ere yon cope  
Again shall glitter as it glitters now,  
Death shall blast them and their unholy hope ;  
For God no longer will their crimes allow ;  
And all who hear their doom its justice shall avow.

Defeated in their aim to find the door,  
Muttering a fierce revenge, they pass away.  
Ah ! little dream they that the night once more,  
And only once, shall brighten into day,  
Ere they and theirs, and all the vale so gay,  
Shall, in one dire destruction, whelmèd be.  
All things proceed as they have done alway.  
In Sodom and her neighbour cities three,  
There are no other thoughts, than thoughts of revelry.

The patriarch's guests now speak to him, and say,  
“Hast thou here any besides these? If so,  
Haste to thy kindred, and, without delay,  
Urge them out of this place with thee to go ;  
For we are come this place to overthrow :  
The cry of them is waxen great on high,  
And God hath sent us to work out this woe :  
Haste to thy kindred, and urge them to fly,  
And see they linger not, for the dread doom is nigh.”

Smitten at once by terror and surprise,  
Lot stands before his guests in mute amaze ;  
And, fixing on them wide and wondering eyes,  
Seems reft of power, except the power to gaze :  
His wildered look his wildered soul betrays :  
Well may the patriarch stand bewildered there,  
With close-clasped hands, as one who inly prays ;  
For these his guests are angels, though they wear  
A simple, human form, and breathe the common air.

To find his guests are angels, and that they  
Are come on such a dreadful ministry,  
May well thus smite the patriarch with dismay,  
Which for awhile, in spite of urgency,  
Holds him inert. At length, in some degree  
Freed from the stupor caused by sudden fright,  
Though still he feels the awe of mystery,  
He goes forth from his home into the night :  
The sky from clouds is clear, and still with stars is bright.

Straightway he hastens to his sons-in-law,  
And warns them of the swiftly-coming woe ;  
And, with an earnestness inspired by awe,  
He urges them with him and his to go  
Out of the city, ere its overthrow ;  
But they regard his warnings with disdain :  
With heavy heart, and eyes from which tears flow,  
He urges them again, and yet again ;  
By all that they hold dear, he urges, but in vain.

Alas for them ! that it should be in vain :  
A few hours hence, and they shall find all true.  
But time forbids Lot longer to remain ;  
He leaves them with a sorrowful, " Adieu ; "  
And, as he leaves, his tears break forth anew.  
He reaches home, and tells his piteous tale.  
Meanwhile, all things their 'customed course pursue ;  
The night wears on, and daylight, pure and pale,  
Fringes the eastern sky and faintly lights the vale.

Soon as the dawn gives sign that day is near,  
The angels hasten Lot, and say, "Arise,  
And take thy wife and daughters who are here,  
Lest the oncoming wrath which hither hies  
To blot this city from beneath the skies  
Doth, with the city, blast both thine and thee ;  
In instant flight thine only safety lies."  
Lot hears, and yet girds not himself to flee ;  
But stands like one whose will hath lost its energy.

What is it that doth make him linger still ?  
Is he so loth to leave his wealth behind ?  
Or is it fear that palsies so his will ?  
Or grief for friends, who to their danger blind,  
Scoffed at his warnings, as if empty wind ?  
Whate'er it be that makes him lingering stand,  
The angels, pitying his distracted mind,  
Take him, his wife, and daughters, by the hand,  
And using kindly force, lead forth the little band.

They tread the city streets for the last time.  
Beneath the early light the city sleeps ;  
Late revellers rarely see the morning's prime,  
And rarely see the beauty morning keeps  
For those who go abroad what time she steepes  
All things that are in her most holy sheen.  
Though angel-led, methinks, each led one weeps,  
So awful, strange, and sad, that night hath been ;  
And awful, strange, and sad, the morning is, I ween.

It is but human, if they now do weep;  
'T would scarce be human, if they had no tears;  
To find themselves, by such a sudden sweep  
Of strange events, riven from the home of years  
And everything that such a home endears,  
To part from friends, and know it is for ever,  
To be soul-shaken by the ghastliest fears;  
Although to weep not, they may make endeavour,  
Must flood the fount of tears, or it is flooded never.

Out through the city gate the angels lead  
The wondering, awestruck, trembling little band,  
Unto a point where nothing can impede  
Their further flight across the open land;  
Thus far, the gracious angels, hand in hand,  
Have led them on, and cheered them in the way;  
But now they part; but, ere they part, they stand  
A moment with them in the twilight grey,  
The angels having yet some warning words to say.

"Escape for life—look not behind—stay not  
In all the plain—to yonder mountain fly,  
Lest thou be lost!" the angels say to Lot.  
But he, filled with great dread, thus makes reply:  
"Not so, my Lord, or I shall surely die;  
The mountain is afar, and ere I gain  
A refuge which doth so remotely lie,  
This awful vengeance, breaking forth amain,  
Shall smite me as I fly across the wide-spread plain.

"Behold this city let me thither flee;  
It is a little one, and it is near;  
O ! let me 'scape to it, and I shall be  
Safe from the evil I so greatly fear!"  
The kindly angels to his plea give ear,  
Replying, "See, we grant thee all thy prayer;  
We will not overthrow this city near;  
But haste thee thither, tarry not elsewhere;  
For we can nothing do till thou be entered there.".

This said, they part. The dusk of early day  
Still veils the landscape partially from view;  
And Lot, now prompt the angels to obey,  
Hastes unto Zoar, as they bade him do,  
Hastes as they haste who know Death doth pursue.  
His hapless wife, lingering, turns back and dies.  
But he gains Zoar, and his daughters too;  
And as they enter, lo ! the sun doth rise,  
A glorious dazzling disc, in clear, unclouded skies.

Look where we may, as yet we see no sign  
Of what shall happen ere this day be done;  
The freshening dew, as wont, lies on the vine,  
And the blue mist tells where the brooklets run,  
And all the birds their carols have begun,  
And myriad wild-flowers yield a sweet perfume;  
A fleckless sky receives the rising sun,  
And yon fair valley, which his beams illume,  
Morn's wonted beauty wears, and all morn's wonted bloom.

Ah ! surely Ruin cannot now be nigh,  
For morning never looked divinelier fair ;  
A purer azure never wore the sky,  
And never sweeter was the balmy air ;  
Never did earth a lovelier aspect wear.  
Ah ! surely, Mercy hath been earthward sent,  
To drive back Vengeance to his gloomy lair.  
Ah ! surely, Justice, lingering, doth relent,  
And Sodom shall, at last, escape her punishment.

Alas, alas ! such hopes are dreams ; for lo !  
A sudden blackness hides the heavenly blue ;  
Over the sun, like a wild wave of woe,  
The darkness dashes, blotting it from view !  
Behold, a wonder, which to earth is new,  
Assassin-like, Night murders the fair Morn,  
And buries her in glooms of blackest hue !  
O ! ominous sign, that she, so lately born,  
Should so untimely die, of all her splendour shorn !

More dreadly dismal grows the gloom, and hark !  
A roaring as the roaring of the sea,  
And pauseless lightnings flash from out the dark,  
And bellowing thunders boom incessantly !  
O, woe ! what shall the end of these things be ?  
Alas ! fair vale, the blasting of the breath  
Of God's displeasure hath come down on thee !  
Thy light is turned into the shadow of death,  
And in the all-shrivelling fires thy beauty perisheth !

And woe ! O Sodom, woe to thee and thine !  
For in one hour thy ruin is complete !  
Never again on thee the light shall shine,  
Nor children shout and play within thy street ;  
Nor at thy gate shall any elders meet ;  
Though sought for, thou shalt never more be found ;  
So clean-destroyed shall be thy very seat,  
There shall be left of thee not even a mound,  
To tell to future times which was thy standing ground.

And you, O men of Sodom, unto you  
Is tenfold woe ; for ye have sown the wind,  
And now ye reap the whirlwind as your due ;  
In vain ye cry for help ye cannot find,  
And grope amid the darkness, as if blind,  
And stumble in the day as in the night !  
Where'er ye look— above, before, behind—  
Portents of vengeance scare you with affright,  
And Death bars every way of refuge or of flight !

O the wild start of those who wake from sleep,  
And, waking, see the fiery tempest fall !  
O the wild woe which looks from eyes which weep  
Despairing tears, as they behold the pall  
Of fire-flecked darkness which doth cover all !  
O the wild wail of children for their mother,  
But ah ! no mother hears their wailing call !  
O the wild glare each man casts on his brother,  
For utterly amazed they are one at another !

O terrible surprisal ! doom how dire !  
Vengeance hath come upon them unaware ;  
The fury of the Lord falls down in fire,  
And Death keeps carnival with wild despair !  
The fiery rain flings wide a ghastly glare,  
Which only helps the doomed to see their doom,  
But shows no safety for them anywhere !  
And still the lightnings flash, the thunders boom,  
And the fierce fire of God doth everything consume !

An hour ago, and Sodom yonder lay  
In seeming safety crowned by morning light ;  
To-day bade fair to be as yesterday ;  
But ah ! since then, how strangely changed the sight ;  
How hapless, helpless, hopeless now her plight !  
The fires infold her in their fierce embrace,  
And Death sits throned upon the burning site !  
All living souls have perished in the place,  
Not even one survives of all the guilty race !

## **"What is Your Life?"**

IN TWO ASPECTS.

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### I.

It is the veil-like vapour morning shows,  
Tracking the brook, which through the valley flows ;  
That vanishes from sight soon as the sun  
Darts his first beams, and day is just begun.

It is a dew-drop, hanging on the thorn,  
Which glitters in the light of early morn ;  
But in an hour, with all its pearly sheen,  
Hath passed away, as though it had not been.

It is a flower which brightens all the place  
In which it blooms, so clothed it is with grace ;  
Supremely fair, it reigns a queen to-day,  
To-morrow comes, and lo ! it fades away.

It is an insect, which at opening morn  
Bursts from its shell, and is to being born ;  
Sports gaily in the sunny, midday light,  
But in the dust drops dead before the night.

It is a rainbow, resting on the storm,  
Perfect alike in colour and in form,  
But evanescent as its parent shower,  
Which falls, and is forgotten, in an hour.

It is a little cloud which flecks yon dome,  
And to the eye looks like a flake of foam,  
Which, as you gaze upon it, fades from view,  
And leaves the heaven one wide, unclouded blue.

It is a shadow, such as oft is seen  
Sweeping across a brilliant summer scene ;  
From field to field it swiftly passes on,  
Climbs the hill-side and glooms it, then is gone.

It is a dream that fringes feverish sleep,  
Which sometimes makes us smile, and sometimes weep ;  
And yet so shadowy are both smiles and tears,  
That we forget them when the day appears.

It is a momentary consciousness,  
Which comes and goes with moanings of distress ;  
Its earliest utterance is a plaintive cry,  
Its latest is a groan, or else a sigh.

It is a star—no, it is not a star ;  
For stars through all the ages steadfast are ;  
'T is not some star which shines as brightly now  
As when it first was set on Night's dark brow,

Which our first mother, pointing to it, showed  
To our first sire, as in the heaven it glowed ;  
She to him saying, “ See that star, how bright !  
It seems the leader of those hosts of light,  
The most imperial star of all the night.”

Ah ! no, it is not like a steadfast star ;  
But to some comet it is liker far,  
Which for a few nights through these lower skies  
Its splendour trails, the wonder of all eyes !  
Then passes from these skies with all its train,  
And henceforth in the heavens is sought in vain.

But it is still more like that meteor light,  
Which, as you walk with some friend in the night,  
Shoots down the sky, and, while you say, “ Look ! look ! ”  
It disappears—like bubble from a brook.

## ASPECT II.

It is the starting of an infinite line,  
Which, once begun, goes on without decline ;  
It had beginning, but shall have no end,  
But on, and on, for ever shall extend.

It is the first faint dawning of a day,  
Which never shall to darkening night give way ;

The breaking of an everlasting morn,  
Which never shall be of its freshness shorn ;  
The rising of a never-setting sun,  
Whose endless course through endless years shall run.

It is a breath of the eternal God,  
Enshrined awhile within a mortal clod ;  
The shrine may perish, but the living breath  
Goes, like an angel, through the gate of death !

It is a thing of awful mystery,  
A being that shall never cease to be ;  
To-day beholds the first gleam of its fire,  
But no to-morrow shall see it expire.

Born to the heirdom of eternity,  
It wears the crown of immortality ;  
Time cannot waste it, nor can Death destroy,  
For with Death's dart it sports as with a toy.

All the most steadfast splendours that we see,  
Like a vain vision of the night may flee ;  
The earth may perish, and the stars may fall,  
But this, unfailing, shall survive them all.

## "Jesus Wept."

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BRIEFEST verse of verses found  
On the holy page ;  
O for power thy praise to sound,  
Both to youth and age.

Though the briefest verse thou art,  
Yet thou shrin'st a truth,  
That doth cheer the inmost heart  
Both of age and youth.

Thy two words enclose such love,  
That we cherish them  
More than earth's best things, above  
Earth's best diadem.

Myriad souls have looked on thee,  
And found sweet relief ;  
Thinking, " Ah ! He weeps with me,  
And knows all my grief."

Thou look'st love, like mother's eyes  
Bending o'er her child ;  
Steadfast as the steadfast skies,  
And as undefiled.

Thou art like an angel face  
Peeping from the page,  
Whose engaging look of grace  
Cheers our pilgrimage.

Thou art like a fleck of light  
Which doth never go ;  
Solacing our human sight  
In our deepest woe.

Briefest verse of verses found  
On the holy page ;  
O for power thy praise to sound  
Both to youth and age !

Thou dost gleam like some rare gem,  
In thy setting there ;  
Ah ! no gem of diadem  
Ever was so rare.

Thou show'st rich as ruby stone  
With its warm love-glow ;  
Ah ! no stone hath ever shone  
Half like thee, I trow.

Thou art fair as loveliest flower  
Garden ever grew;  
Ah! such flower no garden bower  
Ever, ever knew.

Thou dost shine like some bright star  
Which guides wanderer home;  
Ah! such star, 'mid all that are,  
Shines not in yon dome.

Thou art like some dear, fond friend  
Soothing our distress;  
Ah! no friend did ever bend  
O'er us, so to bless.

Thou art sweet as purest spring  
From which wild bird sips;  
Ah! no spring like thee doth bring  
Life to dying lips.

Briefest verse of verses found  
On the holy page;  
O for power thy praise to sound  
Both to youth and age!

Thou didst weep, my Saviour dear,  
O ! those tears of Thine  
Bring Thee very closely near  
This poor heart of mine !

For I know Thou could'st not weep,  
If Thou wert not man;  
But this truth of truths I reap  
In the tears which ran

Channelling Thy sacred cheek  
From Thy flooded eyes ;  
Here is found the truth I seek,  
Here revealed it lies.

Weeping is a human act,  
Tears are sorrow's sign ;  
O ! the comfort of the fact  
That such tears were Thine !

Angels oft on earth have been  
Witnesses of woe ;  
But a tear was never seen  
From their eyes to flow.

Thou didst weep, my Saviour dear,  
O ! those tears of Thine  
Bring Thee very closely near  
This poor heart of mine !

## **"There shall be no more Death."**

---

"**THERE** shall be no more death." O wondrous word,  
That tells us Death shall die, and we shall live,  
And through Eternity meet him no more !

Of what world is it said? Of this? Ah! no.  
Not of this world of sorrow and of sin  
Can it be said, "There shall be no more death;"  
For here, Death reigns, and all that live must die.  
With trembling hand, and with a fearing heart,  
We here hold every joy because of Death.  
And here, alas! Love oft-times inly groans,  
Even when the loved one lies in her embrace,  
Because she fears, and fears because of Death.

The coffin, here, goes through each door in turn,  
And from each door, in turn, comes slowly forth  
The silent, sombre, mournful march of Death.  
Just at this moment, many a home is gloomed  
And many a heart made desolate by Death.

How many now, just in the throes of death,  
Are giving the last word, or the last sign,  
Or the last look, or heaving the last breath !

Some close the eyes in calm and childlike sleep,  
Which, like the twilight deepening into dark,  
Deepens into the marble sleep of death.  
And some, with strained and wide-open eyes,  
Struggle convulsively, groan, quiver, die.

Just at this moment, many a mournful group  
Gathers, grief-stricken, round these dying ones,  
And there are tears and sobs and bitter wails.  
All that hath made this mortal life a joy,  
Death now is rending ruthlessly from some :  
Henceforth, for them, life hath no sunshine left,  
No music and no beauty and no bloom.

Even our affections, in this world, become  
Sources of sorrow. As we multiply  
The objects of our love, we multiply  
The sources whence grief's bitter waters flow.  
Death enters every door that Love throws wide,  
And rifles every treasure that Love guards,  
And every soul linked unto ours by love,  
Becomes a medium through which Death may slay  
Our peace. With touching grace he spake, who said,  
“That every crown of flowers we mortals wear  
Becometh soon or late a crown of thorns.”

How suddenly sometimes, this change is wrought,  
And all our joy turned into heaviness :

One moment finds us wearing festive flowers,  
The next, our brows are bleeding with the thorns,

Ye friends, whose souls friendship so closely joins,  
How soon may Death place you apart, like stars !

O mother, sitting by thy cradled child,  
Down-looking on it in a dream of love,  
As there it lies in its soft-breathing sleep ;  
Amid the happy thoughts which come like doves,  
Flitting about thee as thou sittest there,  
Comes no disturbing one, which, as a hawk  
Would scare the doves, scares happy thoughts away ?  
Doth thought of Death ne'er flutter thy fond heart,  
And turn thy cradle-song into a sigh ?  
Shadows do sometimes fall from clouds on flowers,  
The shadows pass, but the fair flowers remain ;  
But should Death's shadow fall on thy fair flower,  
That shadow goes not by, and O ! the flower !  
And, O ! thy poor heart, who shall comfort it ?

Ye parents, as ye sit beside your hearth  
And look around upon your family,  
Tell me, if your home-circle be complete ?  
Hath the wolf never leaped into your fold,  
And borne away a lamb from out your flock ?  
Hath the wild wind from off your family tree  
Broken no branch, and dashed it in the dust ?

And hath your garden been so fenced about  
That thief ne'er stole a lily, or a rose ?  
Is there no snapped string in your household harp ?  
Hath no star vanished from your little heaven ?  
Is there no lost one in your Pleiades ?  
Did little, restless, pitapatting feet  
Once climb your stairs, and tread your floors, which now  
Lie restful as an image carved in stone ?  
Within your cabinets, do you never see  
Some little things which start the sudden tear,  
And waken memories of the long-since lost ?  
Have you no hoarded garments in your stores,  
Which by the living and the loved were worn,  
But one day were put off, and all exchanged  
For the white, fringed garments of the dead ?

O children, are ye strangers to the tears  
Which sons and daughters weep when parents die ?  
Did you not, one day, taste the bitter cup  
Which Death presents, when a good father dies ?  
And, sobbing with a sorrow naught could soothe  
Did you not one day raise the wailing cry,  
“ My mother, O ! my mother ! ” while your tears  
Fell on the pale face of the dear, dear dead ?

Ye wedded souls, wedded by more than vows,  
Who live each for the other evermore,  
The tender tie which binds you Death will break,  
Unmating you who have been mated long.

One shall be taken and the other left.  
 O ! the sad day to that one left behind !  
 In this world all this happens, and it shall  
 Down to Time's latest hour. We weep for friends,  
 And other friends will weep in turn for us.  
 To weep, and to be wept, this is our lot.

But why, ah ! why, remain we in this gloom ?  
 Why sit we sorrowing here in this dark vale ?  
 Why linger we so long amid the graves ?  
 Why do we tarry so where Death is king ?  
 Is there no realm where he destroys no more,  
 Where Friendship is enduring as the soul ;  
 And Joy puts on her immortality ;  
 And Love abides for ever free from fear ;  
 And sorrow never saddens heart or home ?  
 Is there no gloomless city, o'er whose gates  
 A banner floats, inscribed with the glad words,  
 “Within these walls there shall be no more death ?”

List to the great voice coming out of heaven,  
 Which, loud as thunder, and as clarion clear,  
 Says of the final state of the redeemed,  
 “There shall be no more death.”

O glad decree !

Bright crown of all the blessedness of heaven,  
 Oath of eternal God, which makes bliss sure,  
 And banishes for ever Love's dread foe  
 From all the happy homes of Saints in light !

'T is this assurance of unending life,  
This solemn pledge of immortality,  
Which makes a heaven of heaven—"T is this which throws  
Such charm about society in heaven,  
And gives such zest to all the friendships there.  
'T is this which gives such sweetness to its songs,  
And over all its scenes such glory showers.  
Bliss, to be perfect, must be permanent.  
Let in the fear of loss, and true bliss dies.  
Admit the fear of death to yonder heaven,  
And sorrows sadder than earth ever knew  
Would be experienced there. Admit this fear,  
And what a gloom would on its glory fall,  
And what an awe would silence all its songs;  
And eyes, unused to tears, how they would weep!  
The fear of death in heaven would be despair.

But O ! the glad decree hath sounded forth,  
“There shall be no more death.”  
That fold is safe.  
The wolf shall never come a-near that flock.  
Into that city death shall never pass,  
Nor shall he ever shoot an arrow there,  
Nor cast a bank against it. It is safe.  
They shall not hurt, neither shall they destroy  
In all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.  
  
A tear shall never stain the floor of heaven,  
Nor ever dim the eye of dweller there.

When Sorrow thither flies, driven there by Death,  
With eyes all tears and bosom heaved by sighs,  
She goes up to the gate to enter in,  
And, as she enters, changes into Joy  
(For Sorrow cannot breathe that blissful air).  
Her mouth is filled with laughter and with songs,  
And on her head the crown of life is set,  
And in her hand is put the harp of praise ;  
And, mingling with the myriads of the blest,  
She pours her rapture into heaven's new song.

No pain shall ever touch those ransomed ones,  
No sickness steal their strength, no weakness mar  
The beauty of their everlasting youth !  
Equal to angels now, they cannot die !  
God's will hath made their death impossible !

“There shall be no more death.”

O glad decree !

Comfort ye one another with these words,  
O Christian souls ! and mid the many cares,  
And fears, and pains, and partings of this life,  
Think of the better life which is beyond ;  
The life which knows no death and has no end.  
Think of the myriad, myriad, happy souls,  
Who once feared Death, but fear him now no more ;  
For they do breathe the immortal air of heaven.  
They once had many cares, but have none now ;  
They once had griefs, but they shall grieve no more ;

And tears were theirs—all tears are wiped away;  
And dread of partings—now they part no more.

We stood by some of these now happy souls,  
When Death's dark shadow fell upon them here ;  
We saw them, as they passed into the gloom ;  
And, happy sight for tear-filled eyes to see,  
We saw they walked the darkness not alone ;  
But, like the Hebrew three who walked the flames,  
There was with them One like the Son of God.  
And when the deepening darkness closed them in,  
And we could see no more, we heard them say,  
"I will not fear, for Thou art with me, Lord ;  
Thou art my refuge and my strength Thou art,  
A very present help in time of need.  
O grave, where is thy victory ? O death,  
Where is thy sting ?" and then we heard no more.

Sense failed to follow further. They were gone  
Beyond her ken. But Faith kept them in view,  
And saw them go right to the gate of heaven,  
And, passing through, they went upon the walls,  
And took the banner that hangs o'er the gate,  
And waved it, saying, "Death shall be no more."  
And then the heavenly harpers woke their harps,  
And the redeemed ones sang, and all was joy.

## *Hymn.*

---

God, before whom bending lowly,  
Angel hosts adoring bow,  
Crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy,  
    God omnipotent art Thou;"  
God of heaven, where angels be,  
God of all, we worship Thee.

God invisible, all-seeing,  
God immutable, all-wise ;  
God of everlasting being,  
    Framer of the earth and skies ;  
God of the wild rolling sea,  
God of all, we worship Thee.

God of morning's first outgoing,  
God of noontide's fervid ray,  
God of evening's gorgeous glowing,  
    God of night's sublime display ;  
God of worlds we cannot see,  
God of all, we worship Thee.

God of winter wild and hoary ;  
God of spring with brow wreath-bound ;  
God of summer robed in glory ;  
God of autumn harvest-crowned ;  
God of bird, beast, flower, and tree,  
God of all, we worship Thee.

God the Father, we adore Thee,  
God the Son, adored be Thou,  
God the Spirit, lo ! before Thee,  
Soul and body, both we bow ;  
God of Light, Love, Majesty,  
God of all, we worship Thee.

## Summer Sunday Evening.

---

CALMLY comes on this Sunday evening's close,  
In holiest peace the holy day doth die.  
Fainter and fainter still the splendour grows,  
Which lingers yet on western cloud and sky.  
The scarce perceptible wind, which comes and goes,  
Gives a faint quiver to the leaves, and then  
O'er all things creeps the stillness of repose,  
Until the like faint quiver come again.  
The gentle stir makes stillness seem more still.  
My soul, methinks, so holy is the calm,  
Would scarcely with one timorous tremor thrill,  
Were unseen angels heard to breathe a psalm ;  
Or God's own awful voice to pass this way,  
As once in Eden at the cool of day.

## Harvest Thanksgiving Hymn.

---

PRAISE the Lord, ye people, praise,  
Old and young, your voices raise,  
And beneath this sacred dome,  
Praise the Lord for Harvest-home.  
From the orchard and the field,  
We have brought the fruits they yield,  
And from garden beds and bowers,  
We have wreathed God's house with flowers.

Praise, ye people, praise the Lord,  
He still keeps His ancient word.  
He it is withholds the rain,  
For the sowing of the grain ;  
And, when first the blade is seen,  
Tinting the brown earth with green,  
He, when wintry winds do blow,  
Sheds on it the shielding snow.

He it is bids Winter flee,  
And the fairer Spring-time be,  
Gives the sun, and sheds the showers,  
Which awake the myriad flowers;  
And so gladden everything,  
That all Nature seems to sing;  
And so feed the grass and grain,  
That they wave on every plain.

He it is, when Spring is gone,  
Leads the radiant Summer on,  
Gives those long and lustrous days,  
When the sun's intenser rays,  
By their forceful, fruitful heat,  
Ripening tan the fresh-spiked wheat,  
Until all the corn-cropped wold,  
Changes greenness into gold.

He it is, when Summer goes,  
Gives the milder Autumn glows,  
And again withdraws the rain,  
While the reapers reap the grain,  
Bind the sheaves, and on the land  
Rear the ordered stooks to stand  
For a season—then the wain  
To the garner bears the grain.

Praise, ye people, praise the Lord,  
He still keeps His ancient word ;  
Praise Him for all foodful roots,  
Praise Him for all pleasant fruits,  
Praise Him for the grass and grain  
Garnered safe from wind and rain.  
Here, beneath this sacred dome,  
Praise the Lord for Harvest-home.

## A Vision of Intemperance.

---

I DREAMT 't was midnight: and I stood  
Upon a lonely height;  
A mighty wind on world-wide wings  
Went sweeping through the night;  
With a great sound, as of a sea,  
Storm-dashed upon the shore;  
Or, as if all earth's cataracts  
Combined their rush and roar!

I looked above, but not a star  
Gleamed on my searching eye;  
I looked around, but through the gloom  
No form could I descry.  
Heaven's vaulted cope was overspread  
With clouds of ebon hue;  
To cheer the darkness deep, no ray  
Of radiance met my view.

Mid such wild gloom, methought I stood  
Musing on men and things ;  
On the vast aggregate of woe  
That from intemperance springs.  
When, suddenly as ends the song  
Of the earth-nearing lark ;  
Or, suddenly as lightnings leap  
Out of the threatening dark ;

So suddenly the clouds were cleft,  
And on my startled sight,  
A Being flashed from out the skies,  
As God's own angels bright.  
At once the midnight storm was hushed,  
At once the gloom was gone ;  
And I stood there all wonderment,  
But stood not now alone.

For he whose fulgent form had turned  
The darkness into day,  
Stood now before me, and, o'erawed,  
I sank as lifeless clay.  
“ Fear not, fear not,” the Being said,  
“ I am no foe of thine ;  
I bring no withering curse on earth,  
To bless alone be mine.

"I come not as the foe of man,  
I come in his defence;  
Mortal, this is the name I bear,  
Genius of Temperance."  
Thus spake the heavenly visitant,  
Like the music of the skies,  
So wondrous sweet his accents fell,  
As he bade me fearless rise.

His bidding I obeyed, and rose,  
And looked on him awhile;  
My fear was gone, his visage wore  
A fear-dispelling smile.  
While all around was breathless hush,  
Again the Being spake:  
"I come," he said, "this wicked world  
A better world to make."

"Earth's direst curse is the hateful sway  
Of the fiend Intemperance;  
But, armed with the might of the mighty God,  
I come to hurl him hence.  
The men who plead this sacred cause,  
'T is I who them inspire;  
I touch their hearts with holy zeal,  
Their lips with holy fire.

"I know my votaries everywhere,  
Whether on land or sea ;  
I know that thou art one of them,  
And I come to inspirit thee ;  
I come to stamp upon thy soul  
Those scenes of death and woe,  
With which this baleful fiend hath marred  
This earth where'er we go.

"That thus inspired thou may'st go forth  
Among the sons of men,  
And plead this cause with a burning zeal  
Which never shall wane again."  
So spake he ; then, from that lone scene  
He bore me swift away,  
To other scenes, the haunts of man,  
Where man is passion's prey ;

Where the fierce fiend Intemperance  
Stalked forth in all his power,  
Blighting the buds of human joy,  
And withering hope's fair flower.  
I saw him stalking o'er the earth,  
With myriads in his train  
Of woeful, wasted, ruined souls,  
The souls that he had slain.

And, as he on and onward went,  
More numerous grew that host ;  
For, tasting of the cup he bore,  
Man seemed to reason lost.  
I saw the husband leave his wife,  
To join that wretched crew ;  
I saw the mother leave her child,  
To mingle with it too.

And many a gifted youth I saw,  
Who fed on dreams of fame,  
Lured to that host, and then, alas !  
Disgrace engulfed his name.  
Before that demon and his train,  
Earth like an Eden smiled ;  
Behind them all was desolate,  
And as a desert wild.

Before them songs of joy arose,  
The songs of guiltless glee ;  
Behind them only groans were heard,  
The groans of misery.  
And there amid that host I saw  
The all-feared phantom Death ;  
And from his hideous jaws there streamed  
A pestilential breath

Which blasted all it fell upon ;  
And in his bony fist,  
He gripped that dart whose fateful stroke  
No mortal can resist. .  
I saw him lift his fleshless arm,  
And wildly whirl his dart ;  
Then fiercely smite some reeling wretch,  
And plunge it in his heart.

I saw him smite ten thousand thus,  
As one who smites in flight :  
Strange horror seized and shook my soul  
At the appalling sight.  
And, as he smote them, they blasphemed,  
And thus blaspheming fell ;  
And passed into eternity,  
To meet a drunkard's hell.

O God, what sights of misery  
Did these eyes of mine behold !  
Even now, at thought of all I saw,  
My heart's blood runneth cold.  
O God, what piteous cries I heard  
Ascending to the skies !  
O God, what more than tears of blood  
Were wept by human eyes !

While gazing thus on these dread scenes,  
Again the Being spoke ;  
But I, with terror trembling, shrieked :  
The vision fled, I woke.

## The Bridegroom to his Bride.

A MAY-DAY DREAM.

---

“ LILLA, my love, how beautiful is May !  
What a sweet, virgin freshness earth now wears !  
How pure the sky above us, and how white  
The clouds which sail in stateliest beauty there !  
What an unceasing, many-voicèd song  
Goes up to heaven from the green fields and woods !  
And how like silver, shimmering in the sun,  
Shows yonder river winding through the land !  
And this green bank, how gay with springtide flowers !  
Come, Lilla, love, and let us sit down here,  
’T is an inviting spot; come close, close, close,  
Whiles I do tell thee a sweet dream that came  
Unto my spirit of a scene like this.

“ I dreamt the day had been like this, so calm,  
So beautiful, as if earth had outlived.  
Her curse, and all her pristine charms had been  
Restored. In pearly pureness broke the fair

Fresh morn. The delicate-tinted sky, the fields,  
The woods, the streams, all lovely seemed as erst,  
When, smiling on the new-made world, God said  
That it was good, and angels, gazing, burst  
Into a song, and sent through space a shout,  
A joyous shout, which shook the shining worlds,  
And echoing flew through all infinity.

"Charmed by the matchless day, from early morn  
Till eve, methought, among the fields and woods  
I had been wandering in a trance of joy ;  
Standing, at times, all trembling with delight  
In presence of such beauty, uttering oft,  
' How beautiful, how beautiful is May ! '  
But oftener still, naught but low murmurs came :  
The extremity of feeling hath no words.  
So, sometimes, Lilla, when we are alone,  
And I embrace thee, murmurs pass my lips,  
And my frame quivers with the tremulous joy.

" Well, so it was, methought noon long had passed,  
And now the sun far down the slope of heaven  
Gathered about him all his setting pomp.  
Masses of gorgeous clouds hung o'er the west,  
Like mountains whose high tops were tipt with fire,  
Whose bases a bright sea of gold embathed,  
And whose precipitous acclivities  
Were dashed and ribbed with every glorious hue.  
While others, all unstained from base to crest,

Teeming with light, seemed pure, translucent snow.  
Steeped in the resplendent glory, earth reposed.  
Absorbed, entranced, o'ermastered by the sight,  
I stood—a breathing statue—and admired;  
Conscious of beauty, but of naught beside.

“When suddenly the radiant air was filled  
With softest, sweetest music, and a shape  
Of unsurpassèd loveliness and grace  
Approached me. She was young. A robe of green  
Vested, yet gave to view, her faultless form.  
Her eye was as yon purest azure pure.  
Her beauteous head was garlanded with flowers;  
Not the gay, flaunting flowers that summer yields,  
But such as bloom around thee, Lilla, here.  
The pure and pensile lily of the vale,  
And the bright hyacinth, whose azure bells  
Gleam on us from yon copse like eyes of love,  
The cowslip, primrose, and forget-me-not,  
The daisy, and the dusk-blue violet,  
And other flowers, 'tis needless now to name  
All simple flowers of nature, but to me  
More beautiful, in their simplicity,  
Than the more sumptuous ones which culture rears.

Beneath this garland her loose tresses fell  
In rich profusion round her shapely neck,  
And streamed adown full half-way to her feet.

"Untold, I knew at once that she was May.  
Then, nigher yet she drew, and in soft tones  
And gentle as did ever fall from lips  
Of love, and as sweet music sweet, spake she :  
'Lover of Nature's beauty, Nature's child,  
Nor unremarked, nor unapproved by me  
Have been thy devious wanderings this day.  
I saw thee when the fair, fresh, stainless morn  
Broke, flower-like, from the dusky sheath of night,  
Standing on yonder upland, to behold  
The wonderful unveiling of the view  
As dawn grew into day; and now I come  
The raptures of this rapturous day to crown.'

"This said, she straightway waved her hand, and three  
Attendant nymphs, till then unseen, appeared,  
Life, Beauty, Love, the names the triad bore.  
Then from the wreath that garlanded her brow,  
The beauteous May selected several flowers,  
And intertwined them till they seemed as one.  
Among the flowers selected thus, I marked  
A daisy, cowslip, and a violet.  
Then, with a smile, she kissed the twined flowers,  
And lo ! they changed into a maiden's form,  
Rivalling her own in faultlessness of mould,  
But lacking life and motion. Not a stain  
Marred its exquisite finish—free from fleck  
As purest Parian wrought by sculptor's hand  
Into a monument of maidenhood.

"Life, Beauty, Love, approached the unbreathing form,  
And in succession kissed the uncoloured lips.  
The lovely creature breathed. And once again  
They kissed the colourless lips ; her eyes unclosed,  
And the warm flush of beauty o'er her spread,  
Like the first flush of morning o'er the sky,  
Tinging her cheeks with loveliest sea-shell hue,  
And her once colourless lips like coral glowed.

"Then over her May flung a pure, white robe,  
And led her by the hand to where I stood,  
Saying unto me, 'Take this gift from May.'  
I clasped her to my beating, bounding heart,  
And pressed upon her lips a wild, fond kiss ;  
The rush of joy aroused me, and I woke.

"Lilla, my love, with thee beside me here,  
Amid the glory of this May-day scene,  
Under this heaven of everlasting blue,  
My dream comes back to me—a dream fulfilled ;  
The vision has become a verity.  
Thou art the peerless one I clasped and kissed ;  
No dream beguiles me now, for thou art mine.  
May gave thee birth—this May-morn we were wed ;  
And, now, O loveliest, as my own sweet bride,  
I clasp, and kiss, and claim thee mine, mine, mine."

## A Dream of Life and Love.

---

STRONG as an angel, swift as light, unwearied as its God,  
How often doth the soul in dreams, as if free from its clod,  
Traverse the earth, or soar aloft the distant stars among,  
And listen, in its upward flight, to bursts of star-born song,  
And catch, as like the light it sweeps by many a shining  
sphere,  
Glints of a grandeur passing far aught eye beholdeth here.

How often, too, the spirit seems to live in one brief night,  
Through months and years of chequered life of sorrow  
and delight.

'T was even so with me last night, mine eager soul did  
seem  
To live in that brief space through years ; list ! whiles I  
tell my dream.

I dreamt 'twas eve, but still not yet had Earth received  
Night's shroud ;  
The glorious arch of heaven was decked with many a  
golden cloud ;

The minstrelsy of Nature rang from every leafy tree  
I gazed upon the beautiful, I listened to the free.  
Methought I stood, where oft I've stood, in a garden  
    large and fair,  
And saw, beneath a wide-spread tree, a maiden standing  
    there.  
A man of noble stature stood that maiden fair beside,  
She was the chosen of his heart, he sought her as his  
    bride.  
In gentle tones he spake of love, of love that changeth  
    not,  
And clasped her to his bosom there, on that love-hallowed  
    spot.  
Then eyes met eyes, and lips met lips, and heart was  
    pressed to heart,  
And each pledged each that naught but death their  
    plighted souls should part.  
  
Then suddenly, all vision-like, the whole view passed  
    away ;  
And time passed on, and brought again the Spring-time  
    and sweet May.  
Methought I stood beside a church, it was an ancient  
    pile,  
And on it the bright sunlight fell, like God's all-gladden-  
    ing smile.  
And as I stood and looked, there came a nuptial pageant  
    by,  
And she, the maiden I had seen beneath the sunset sky,

Was there, arrayed in bridal robes, and wreathed with bridal flowers,

Fair as our mother Eve when first she breathed in Eden's bowers.

And he who spake of love to her, beneath the wide-spread tree,

Now led the chosen of his heart his beauteous bride to be.  
I went within that ancient pile, and there I saw them stand

Before the altar and the priest, hand closely clasping hand.

I heard the binding ritual read, and, with unwavering heart,

I heard each vow to each, "We love until death us do part."

And, as I heard, with ardent soul I breathed this prayer on high,—

"God, grant that Thy unshadowed smile on those two souls may lie."

A year had sped; and I then stood within a spacious room

Where elegance and beauty reigned; 'twas Love's own cherished home.

Again I saw that lady fair, in all her beauty still,  
But now a more than maiden love her gentle heart did thrill;

Since last I saw her she had found a mother's rapturous joy,  
And to her bosom now she clasped a beauteous infant boy;

And often she did press her lips upon his dainty cheek,  
And look upon him with a love that language cannot  
speak.

Then lady, chamber, child, and all, passed somehow out  
of view ;

And Time, that tarries not nor tires, unresting onward flew.

And then, again, I seemed to stand within that self-same  
room,

Where elegance and beauty reigned, and still 't was Love's  
dear home.

But since within it last I stood full many a year had fled,  
And many a loved one, living then, now slept as sleep  
the dead.

Within the room a lady sat her husband close beside ;  
Though somewhat changed, I recognised the bridegroom  
and the bride,

Whom in that ancient pile I heard, with firm, unwavering  
heart,

Vow each to each the binding words, "We love till death  
us part."

Four of their children nigh them sat, fair maidens all were  
they,

And one of them did sweetly sing an old and plaintive lay,  
Which wakened memories of the past ; methought, I, lis-  
tening, wept

O'er thoughts that in my lonely heart for long, long years  
had slept ;

And all within the room did weep, and the song closed  
with a sigh,

Ah ! Why did that old melody bring tears to every eye ?  
It told of voices hushed in death, of eyes which once  
beamed bright,

Whose love-lit orbs were darkened now, for death had  
quenched their light.

It told of friends, dear friends, who long had passed away  
from earth,

Friends who had wept with them in grief, and mingled  
in their mirth.

Those maidens also spake of one, a brother who had died  
In Hindostan, and found a grave hard by the Ganges' side.  
At once I knew that he must be the beauteous infant boy,  
Whom in his mother's arms I saw, his mother's first-born  
joy.

Then, silence fell upon all lips at thought of other years,  
And I withdrew, and left them there all tenderness and tears.  
How is it that our memory so close to sorrow clings ?  
How is it that the sorrowful are the best-remembered  
things ?

For so it is, I found it so, in this part of my dream,  
That sorrows past stand clearly out, while the joys all  
vanished seem.

Then, as before, unresting Time flew ever on and on,  
Until, methought, the summer flowers three times had  
come and gone.

When lo ! I found myself within a darkly-curtained room,  
And strangely o'er my spirit came a sense of awe and  
gloom.

And, standing round a couch, I saw those four fair maids  
again,

And they were weeping, and I, too, could scarce my tears  
restrain.

And near them stood a manly one who seemed absorbed  
in grief ;

*He* would have wept, but ah ! the tears came not to his  
relief.

Though numerous years had wrought a change, yet I could  
clearly see

He was the same I saw that eve beneath the wide-spread  
tree.

And she who pledged him then her love, the chosen of  
his heart,

Now lay upon the bed of death, and O ! 'twas hard to part.  
As rivers wider, deeper grow more distant from their source,  
So had their mutual love increased, throughout their earthly  
course.

Those maidens wept ; yet, cheered by hope, they wept not  
in despair,

For she, the dying one, rejoiced in Jesus' love and care.  
She looked up at those weeping ones, and bade them  
dry their tears,

And spake of that eternal home where love no parting fears.  
Then, as she lay, she raised her hand, beckoning her  
husband near,

And when he bent him o'er the bed, her failing voice  
to hear,  
She kissed him on the cheek, and said, "God's blessing  
be on thee,  
For all the loving tenderness which thou hast shown to me.  
We shall not long be parted, Charles, 't will be but as  
to-morrow,  
And we shall meet where is no pain, nor death, nor  
any sorrow."  
And then she sighed, and sighing, died ; O ! what a  
quivering thrill  
Shot through each anguished bosom ; then, a moment,  
all was still  
As the unbroken hush of death ; that chamber seemed  
to me  
A sacred spot, standing between Time and Eternity !

Not long was that unbroken hush around that dying bed ;  
Again the voice of weeping rose o'er the unconscious dead.  
And then I saw that manly one, with ever-constant heart,  
Kiss the pale dead, and say to it, "Although death us  
do part,  
Annie, the love that linked our souls nor life nor death  
can sever,  
And here, beside thy dear, dead form, I plight my troth  
for ever."

## A Christmas Carol.

---

CHRIST is born: to tell His birth  
Angels hasten down to earth;  
And the darkness of the night  
Glows with strange celestial light.

Christ is born: the shepherds hear  
These glad words and lose their fear;  
And the plains near Bethlehem ring  
With the song the angels sing.

Christ is born: the shepherds say,  
“Bethlehem let us seek straightway;”  
And they find the Holy Child,  
And the Virgin-Mother mild.

Christ is born: the shepherds sing  
As they back the tidings bring;  
Tell the news to all they meet,  
Whether in the field or street.

Christ is born : and far and near,  
All the people, when they hear  
What the shepherds have to say,  
Wonder, as they go their way.

Christ is born : and Heaven is glad,  
And Earth need no more be sad ;  
For this unexampled birth  
Tells us Heaven is wed to Earth.

Christ is born : and darkness flies,  
For the Sun of Suns doth rise ;  
And from Him flows that true light  
Which shall banish Pagan night.

Christ is born : and God bestows  
That great gift whose worth none knows ;  
Worth no angel tongue can tell,  
For it is unspeakable.

Christ is born : and Justice now  
Kisses Mercy on the brow ;  
Vengeance, gentle as a dove,  
Smiles, and straight embraces Love.

Christ is born : and doubt and dread  
May be driven from heart and head ;  
For behold, where, in his lair,  
Slain by Hope, lies dead Despair.

Christ is born : and on His brow,  
Who doth wear our nature now,  
Gleams the crown that bears the words,  
"King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

Christ is born : and now we know  
Love hath vanquished every foe ;  
And that throned all thrones above,  
Love doth sit, for God is Love.

**D**ay.

---

Two beauteous sisters are the Day and Night ;  
The one a blonde, the other a brunette.  
Day hath a face and form in which are met  
All attributes of grace that charm the sight ;  
Her large blue eyes beam with the laughing light  
Of joy, and her fair face, wherever seen,  
Makes gladness be where grief before had been.  
Behold her ! coming o'er yon eastern height ;  
She smiles, and all the birds break into song,  
And all the flowers diffuse their sweetest sweets,  
And all men bless her as she trips along,  
Flushing and blushing, gladdening all she meets.  
All hearts do homage to her beauty rare,  
And all lips praise her, saying, " O, how fair ! "

## Night.

---

NIGHT is a maiden of another mien :  
To lift the eyes and look upon her face,  
Is to be won by the majestic grace  
That makes her what she is—a peerless queen.  
Whoso hath gazed on her, hath, gazing, seen  
A sight to smite him with immortal love.  
Behold her ! as she takes her place above ;  
Her dark blue garments glittering with the sheen  
Of all the stars ! With what a stately air  
She walks the heavens, making them beautiful !  
Unlike her sister Day, whom all call fair,  
The crowds regard her not ; for they are dull  
To charms like hers. But O ! the gifted few  
Yield up their souls to her in homage deep and true !

To —,

**ON THE DEATH OF HER ELDEST SON WHO WAS DROWNED.**

---

LADY, sitting sad and lonely,  
 On the sea of sorrow toss'd ;  
 Thinking ever, thinking only  
 Of the loved one lost.

Ah ! I ask not why thou weep'st,  
 What can nature do but weep ?  
 Ah ! I ask not why thou keepest  
 Watch, while others sleep.

Lady, thou hast cause to languish,  
 Death hath laid thy first-born low ;  
 Mother, thou hast known the anguish  
 None but mothers know.

'T was but lately' he stood near thee,  
 Beauteous in his youthful prime,  
 Like the given of God to cheer thee  
 Through the vale of Time.

Parted from him, hope of meeting  
Gladness to thy spirit gave ;  
But, alas ! how was he fleeting  
To an early grave.

Lady, thou hast cause to languish,  
Death hath laid thy first-born low ;  
Mother, thou haſt known the anguish  
None but mothers know.

In the grave they now have placed him,  
Dust hath been consigned to dust ;  
But the piety which graced him,  
Yields the certain trust

That his soul hath passed the portal  
Of that city in the skies,  
Built by God for souls immortal  
Who obtain life's prize.

Lady, let not then thy sorrow  
Be the sorrow of despair ;  
Mother, O ! the happy morrow,  
When thou meet'st him there !

Here is comfort. Mortal sadness  
Never more shall shade his brow ;  
Heaven's perpetual glow of gladness  
Is his being now.

**C.** —

**ON HER ELEVENTH BIRTHDAY.**

---

LITTLE maiden, since the moment when thou first didst  
speak to me,  
I have felt my spirit quiver with a tenderness toward thee ;  
There was something in thy movements, there was some-  
thing in thy mien,  
There was something in thy sweet young face that  
charmed me soon as seen,  
There was something in thy gentle voice that strangely  
influenced me,  
Its tender tone of thoughtfulness and its sweet placidity  
Came stealing o'er my spirit more like a feeling than a  
sound ;  
And in my heart of hearts I felt that my soul to thine  
was bound  
By the mystic spell of sympathy, which soul flings over  
soul,  
Subtle and strong as the power which turns the needle  
to the pole.

Little maiden, on this morning, this first morning of sweet May,  
While the woods with songs are ringing and the fields with flowers are gay,  
I would weave for thee a garland of the fairest flowers that grow,  
Were I where the primrose blossoms, were I where the violets blow,  
I would weave for thee a garland of the fairest flowers of May,  
And then would twine it round thy brow, and my heart the while would say :  
“ O lovely are ye, little flowers, but lovelier far to me Is the little maid whose brow ye grace, O so fair to see is she !  
O lovely are ye, little flowers,” my heart the while would say,  
“ But lovelier far this little maid, for she is the pride of May.”

Little maiden, all before thee lies the chequered course of life,  
All the joy and all the sorrow, all the peace and all the strife,  
All the sinking and the soaring, all the shade and all the sheen,  
And the hope that longs for what shall be, and the grief for what hath been,

All the fluttering, all the fearing, all the doubting, all  
the trust,  
All the weeping over loved ones when the dust goes  
down to dust,  
All the wondering and the brooding over what is dark  
and drear,  
Which so strangely gloom and gladden the poor human  
spirit here.

Little maiden, on this morning, this first morning of  
sweet May,  
While the woods with songs are ringing, and the fields  
with flowers are gay,  
Though I cannot weave a garland, I can breathe for  
thee a prayer,  
I can ask for thee the guidance and the ever-loving care  
Of the ever-blessed Saviour, who knows all the hopes  
and fears  
That may brighten or may darken thy life's path through  
all the years.

O thou Saviour ever-blessed ! O great Lord of life and  
death !  
As a dear, cherished child of Thine, down to her latest  
breath,  
Guard Thou this little maid, and then, when life's last  
link doth sever,  
Take her, O take her to Thyself, for ever and for ever !

## To my Son.

---

What shall I wish, my own dear boy, for thee?

I wish thee bodily health—a precious boon,

Unequalled by aught else beneath the moon,

The very crown of things which temporal be,

Both root and fruit of physical purity.

I wish thee knowledge, accurate and wide,

The best preservative from that mean pride

Which in half-knowing natures most we see.

I wish thee, as a portion of thy dower,

Wisdom, that thou mayst use thy knowledge well.

I wish thee faith in God—a peerless flower,

More to be cherished than my tongue can tell.

I wish thee humble, shouldst thou reach high state.

I wish thee Good in preference to Great.

## The Degradation.

---

SCENE—A lawn, with a view from it opening towards the west, which is now all aglow with the sunset. Round the lawn, seats are arranged for the maidens composing the court of the Queen of Beauty. At one end of the lawn, a florally-adorned dais is reserved for the Queen.

OCCASION—The degradation of three knights.

THE sun is sinking in the west  
With more than wonted splendour ;  
And Nature in those charms is drest,  
That sunset-light doth lend her ;

And in the sky the crescent moon  
Her cloud-like curve discloses ;  
It is the glorious month of June,  
The month of love and roses.

The sunset glow the place bedights,  
As fairest forms step lightly  
Across the lawn, and, led by knights,  
Are bowed to seats politely.

Then comes the Queen, and, as she comes,  
Right loyally is greeted ;  
And mid the sound of trumps and drums,  
The Royal Fair is seated.

And every knight on bended knee  
Swears by her matchless beauty,  
That he will ever faithful be  
To woman, love, and duty.

Then kiss they each her lily hand,  
And each with proud step passes,  
And takes with stateliness his stand  
By one of those sweet lasses.

And so that level lawn around  
Sit maidens bright with beauty ;  
And there beside them now are found  
Knights true to love and duty ;

Knights of the true chivalric mould,  
By danger all undaunted ;  
Knights such as saved, in days of old,  
Fair maids from castles haunted ;

Knights ever ready to repay  
Wrongs done to maiden beauty :  
In fact, knights true, again we say,  
To woman, love, and duty.

All being placed, the trumpets sound  
Another flourish feathly ;  
And straight o'er all the courtly ground  
Deep silence reigns completely.

Then rose the Queen, a slight flush on her face  
Gave to her beauty a still sweeter grace ;  
And with a quiet and a queenly air  
She spake. Her words were these : “ My sisters fair,  
And ye bold knights and true, who on this day  
Attend my court, to you I need not say  
That we are met to vindicate the laws  
Which bind the knighthood to our queenly cause ;  
To you I need not say, that chivalry  
Requires that every knight should ever be  
Willing to do the will of lady fair,  
And for her honour every danger dare ;  
I need not say, that in my royal realm,  
No knight is worthy to wear sword or helm,  
If he refuse to wear a leaf or flower,  
Which maiden hands have plucked from field or bower.  
It matters not whate'er that leaf may be,  
The law is—‘ That he wear it gallantly ; ’  
Yea, should the leaf be artichoke, or flag,  
Or even rhubarb, not a single rag  
Of knightly raiment shall be on him found,  
If he date cast such leaf upon the ground.  
The law is—‘ Wear it, whatsoe'er it be,  
If hand of maiden gave it unto thee.’

"And now, as Queen, in whom resides the power  
To knight and unknight in the self-same hour,  
I order that Sir Harry, Sam, and Joe,  
Be forward brought, at once to undergo  
The degradation due to the great crime,  
Committed 'gainst my throne and power sublime."

At once her queenly bidding was obeyed ;  
And the three recreant knights their entrance made,  
Led on by knights cuirassed in glittering steel,  
Right to the throne, and sternly bade to kneel.  
Then, with an air of regal pride and power,  
And with a look which was—yes, was—even sour,  
She said :

"Let every maid and knight here know,  
That these three knights, Sir Harry, Sam, and Joe,  
Have most outrageously defied the laws  
Which bind the knighthood to our queenly cause ;  
Yes, they have wilfully refused to wear  
Rhubarb and artichoke, with which our fair  
Three sisters did bedeck them. Therefore, they  
Shall be degraded by my power this day.  
"Take from the apostate knights their swords," said she.  
Their swords were taken from them instantly.  
"Unspur their heels," she said, "and let them be  
Bereft of every badge of chivalry.  
And give to me their swords."

Their swords were given ;

And, grasping one, she raised her arm toward heaven,  
And gave each knight a most terrific thwack  
With the flat sword upon his bended back,  
Which made them wriggle as no doubt you've seen  
A school-boy do, when caned his back hath been.  
And then she said,

“ Go ! stript of knighthood, go,  
And be henceforth plain Harry, Sam, and Joe ! ”

## The Maiden's Regret.

---

THE clock has struck ten, and I'm sitting alone,  
For my sweetheart has just said, "Good night;"  
But my spirit is sad, and I feel I must own  
That at parting I didn't do right.  
For he wanted to kiss ; I drew back and said, "Nay,"  
In a peevish and petulant style ;  
But I wish, O I wish I had sent him away  
Wlth a kiss, a kind word, and a smile.

And I said, as he went, "You don't care for me,"  
But I wish I had never said so ;  
For the words were unkind, and true they can't be,  
Or he wouldn't thus come and thus go.  
For he goes a drear road, and he risks a rude fray  
With footpads or others as vile ;  
And I wish, O I wish I had sent him away  
With a kiss, a kind word, and a smile.

And he comes every week—what I say is quite true,  
And he never was known to forget ;  
He comes when 't is fine, and he often comes, too,  
Through the gloom and the cold and the wet.  
I 'm sure he must love me, and therefore I say,  
Without any deception or guile,  
That I wish, O I wish I had sent him away  
With a kiss, a kind word, and a smile.

He comes in all seasons ; he comes in the spring,  
And he comes when the summer is bright,  
He comes when the woods, like a wild bird's wing,  
With all tints of the autumn are dight.  
And he often says to me, "Come, sweet, let us stray  
Through the wood by the well-known stile ;"  
And I wish, O I wish I had sent him away  
With a kiss, a kind word, and a smile.

And he comes full as often when winter is here,  
And the wild wind sweeps over the wold ;  
And surely, in this, I have proof very clear  
That his love unto me is not cold.  
He comes and he stays quite as late as in May,  
And walks home through the dark many a mile ;  
And I wish, O I wish I had sent him away  
With a kiss, a kind word, and a smile.

And I will from this time ; for I 'm quite, quite sure,  
That no man worth a straw would do so,  
Unless in his heart there were love deep and pure  
To the maiden whom thus he doth woo.  
So when he comes to me, I 'll always be gay ;  
And when he parts from me awhile,  
I 'll clasp his dear neck, and I 'll send him away  
With a kiss, a kind word, and a smile.

## A Song.

---

We were standing by the window,  
Looking out upon the night ;  
And the moon walked in her brightness,  
Laving all things in her light.  
And her beauty-giving splendour  
Shimmered on the quivering leaves  
Of the trees, whose spreading branches  
Almost touched the cottage eaves.

We had met there after severance,  
Which had lasted several years ;  
She—the girl, was now a woman,  
With a woman's hopes and fears ;  
I—the youth, had grown to manhood,  
But my heart had all the while  
Throbbed at thought of her dear image,  
And her well-remembered smile.

Can it, then, be any wonder,  
That on such a beauteous night,  
We should go forth from the cottage  
Into Love's own chosen light?  
Can it, then, be any wonder,  
With such witchery all about,  
That the secret, so long cherished,  
Like all secrets, should creep out?

Can it, then, be any wonder,  
With such memories of the past,  
That the love, till then unspoken,  
Should be spoken at the last?  
Can it, then, be any wonder,  
Though the moon was looking on,  
That we kissed and pledged each other  
We would wed, and make twain, one?

## To —

---

MAIDEN, thou art ever with me,  
Wheresoe'er I be ;  
Nothing hath the power to sever  
Thy fair form from me.

Thou art with me, as a vision  
That makes all things bright ;  
A sweet vision, that doth never  
Vanish from my sight.

Thou art with me, when I mingle  
With the crowds of men ;  
Thou art with me, when I wander  
In the lonely glen.

Thou art with me, when the morning,  
Like an opening rose,  
Doth her tender, maiden beauty  
Blushingly disclose.

Thou art with me, when the sunset  
Flushes all the skies ;  
With me—as I watch the glory  
Fading—till it dies.

Thou art with me, when the noontide  
Glows with fullest light ;  
With me still, when all the star-worlds  
Gem and crown the night.

Thou art with me, as a vision  
That makes all things bright ;  
A sweet vision, that doth never  
Vanish from my sight.

And my life hath risen to rapture,  
Since thou saidst to me,  
In a sweetly modest murmur,  
“I love none but thee.”

---

FAIR Luna, the Queen of the night, had ascended  
Her throne in the pure azure concave above ;  
Her light and the light of the stars were blended,  
Like souls that are blent by commingling of love.

So calm was the night that I felt the sweet calm ;  
The air was so still, not a leaf seemed to stir ;  
It was as if Nature had sung her day's psalm,  
And night was the time of devotion for her.

A voiceless devotion ; so seemed it to me,  
As homeward, last even, I wandered alone ;  
I felt the hour sacred to thought and to thee,  
And Love, like the moonlight, gave all a soft tone.

As Luna in heaven is peerless to sight,  
So peerless to me art thou, my sweet dove ;  
As Luna in heaven reigns Queen of the night,  
So thou in my heart reign'st Queen of its love.

---

## FEBRUARY 14TH.

MAIDEN, many an idle lay,  
Meaningless and insincere,  
Hath been written for this day,  
As on many a former year.  
But among such idle things,  
Do not rank this rhyme of mine ;  
But, believe me, that it springs  
Out of love, sweet Valentine.

Love to thee sincere and strong,  
    Love as lasting as the skies ;  
Love for ever fresh and young,  
    Love that neither droops nor dies ;  
Love that, had it crowns to give,  
    Would bestow them upon thee ;  
Love that feels it bliss to live,  
    Whispering, "She loveth me ;"  
Love that willingly would share  
    Any sorrow that is thine ;  
Love that fearlessly would dare  
    Death for thee, sweet Valentine.

---

AGAIN I stand, where I have often stood,  
    And gaze upon the flame-flushed sunset sky ;  
A gorgeous glory falls on field and flood,  
    And bathes with beauty all that meets the eye.  
O ! for thy presence in a scene like this,  
    For that would give a grace to all the rest ;  
Would put the crown of perfectness on bliss,  
    And make me among mortals the most blest !

The night is come, the stars are in the sky ;  
    I sit in loneliness beside my fire ;  
My thoughts are with thee, and the unconscious sigh  
    Too plainly tells how strong is love's desire.

O ! wert thou here, and sitting by my side,  
And could I name thee by the name of wife,  
How proudly should I call thee " My sweet bride,  
The glory, grace, and gladness of my life ! "

---

THE violets you sent me came to-day :  
(Blessings be with thee for the simple gift ;  
Simple, though having wondrous power to lift  
My soul above the gnawing cares which prey  
On inner peace, and bear me straight away  
To woodland haunts, haunts ever dear to me,  
And doubly dear since they are linked with thee.)  
What little innocents they look ! How gay  
They must have made the quiet, bosky nook  
In which they grew, oft visited by the bee !  
The throstle, as he perched him by the brook,  
Made the place echo morn and eve with glee.  
Blessings be with the violets and with thee,  
For they have borne my thoughts where I would be.

---

MAIDEN, amid severest pain,  
How sweetly come the thoughts of thee ;  
Like angels ministering to me  
They come, and help me to sustain

These fearful pangs, which else would be  
Too much for my poor flesh to bear ;  
O blessed Love ! for Love doth share  
My sorrows, as I think of thee.

O sure it is not when the light  
Falls on our path and all is joy,  
That love is felt without alloy,  
That love is felt in all its might.

When Sorrow o'er us spreads her night,  
'T is then sweet Love is felt to be  
An angel in her purity,  
An angel in her succouring might.

---

I heard the cuckoo telling out his name.  
He went repeating it the whole day long,  
Himself the constant burden of his song.  
"Twas "Cuckoo, cuckoo," wheresoe'er he came,  
At morn, at noon, at eve, 'twas still the same ;  
Till every wood, and brake, and field, and burn,  
Had grown familiar with the name in turn,  
So ceaselessly he did himself proclaim.

And I, I breathe a name where'er I go,  
In woods, and fields, and by each wandering stream ;  
I breathe it too, to all the flowers that blow ;  
It goes forth from my lips as in a dream.  
But ah ! the name I utter is not mine,  
A dearer name I breathe,—the name is thine !

---

“*Pensez à moi.*” Ah ! dost thou think  
That I can ever thee forget ?  
As soon might day in darkness sink,  
While Sol burns in the zenith yet.

As soon, with instantaneous flash,  
Might midnight brighten into noon ;  
Or ocean's waves forget to dash,  
Drawn shoreward by the maiden moon :

As soon might Summer nourish snows,  
Or Winter foster tender flowers,  
Or Youth exchange its rapturous glows  
For Age's weary, painful hours :

As soon might Poet feel the fire  
Of inspiration—yet be dumb ;  
Nor put his hand upon the lyre,  
Though feeling's chosen hour be come :

As soon might Love feel naught but hate,  
And Hatred cherish naught but love ;  
Or War and Peace together mate,  
Or Eagle fondle with the Dove :

As soon might Beauty be abhorred,  
And what is charmless chosen be ;  
Or Truth forego her plighted word,  
As I could fail to think of thee.

When Morning flings o'er earth and sky  
Her new-born light, profuse and free,  
My waking thoughts do straightway fly,  
Like uncaged carrier-doves, to thee.

Through all the onward hours of day,  
My thoughts, like swallows, round thee sweep :  
They never wander far away,  
They never long-time from thee keep.

When Evening comes, and Day doth die,  
And Night her starry vestment weaves,  
My thoughts still, bird-like, flutter nigh,  
Or nestle 'neath thy cottage eaves.

When o'er me creeps the spell of sleep,  
With thoughts of thee the dark night teems ;  
Even then thou dost thine empire keep,  
The Queen of all the realm of dreams.

I wandered o'er the hills with thee, my sweet,  
And glorious were the hills that day to me ;  
Softer than moss the turf seemed 'neath my feet,  
And a strange glory hung about each tree.  
The fern was clothed with an especial grace,  
The wind like wandering perfume passed me by ;  
**A** sweet enchantment gladdened all the place,  
And glorified alike earth, air, and sky.  
Next week, alone, I roamed those hills again ;  
The day was sumptuous as before, and bright ;  
But the sweet something vesting all things then,  
Had now evanished from each heathy height.  
Such power thy presence hath to raise the real  
Into the fairer realm of the ideal.

---

'T is midnight, and thou, doubtless, dost repose.  
Perchance, thou tread'st the shadowy land of dreams,  
And pluckest flowers, and wanderest by streams  
Sweet, fresh, and fair beyond aught this earth knows.  
Perchance, within thy spirit now there glows  
The joy we feel when we do dream of joy.  
The night should bring thee bliss without alloy,  
Had I the power to rule the ebbs and flows

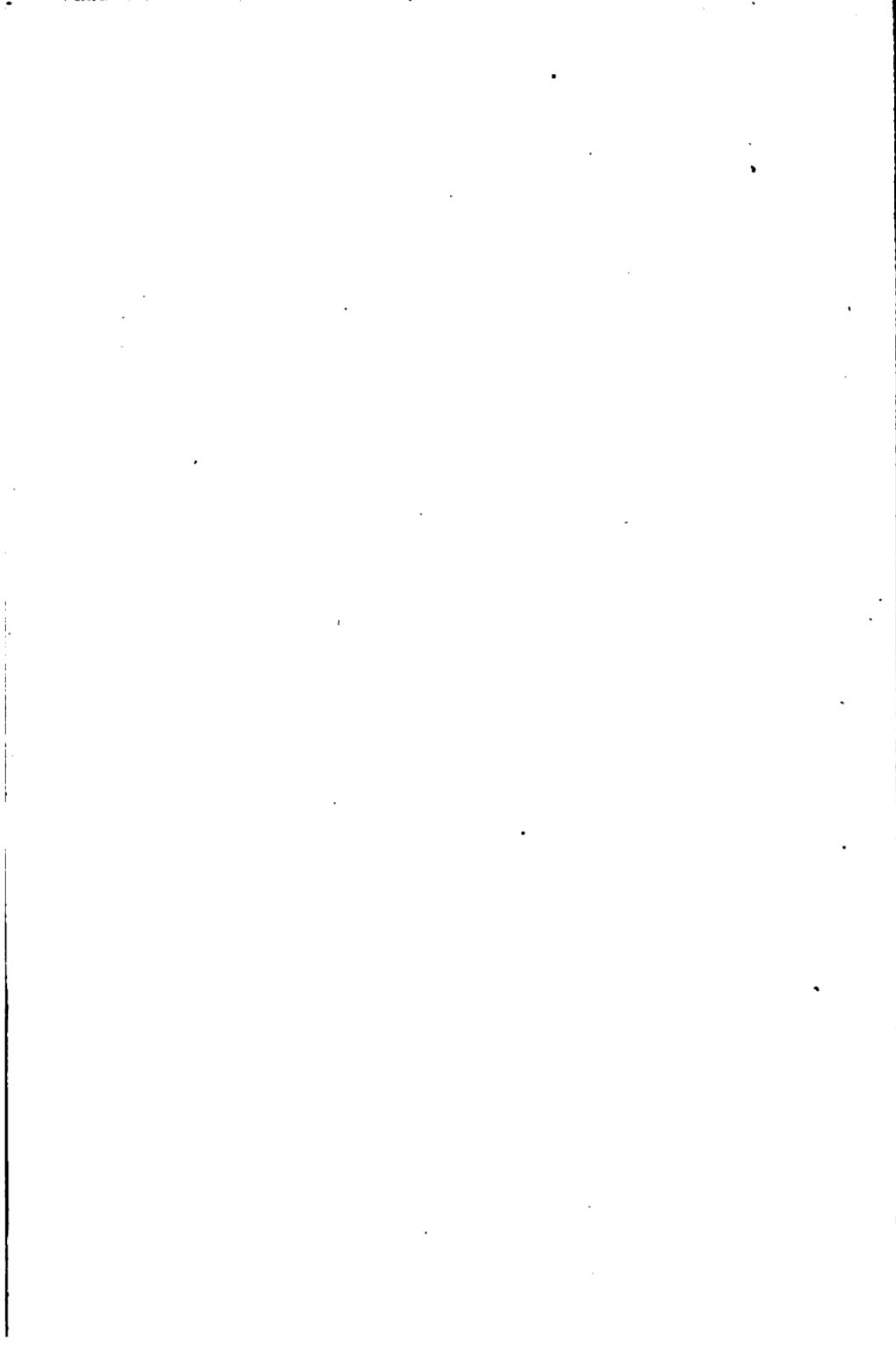
Of thy soul's being. All thy dreams should be  
    Of things thou lovest with most passionate love :  
Fair flowers, and stately trees, and the wild glee  
    Of birds, rivers, and hills, the sky above,  
And the white clouds which look like mounts of snow :  
All these idealised thy dreams should show.

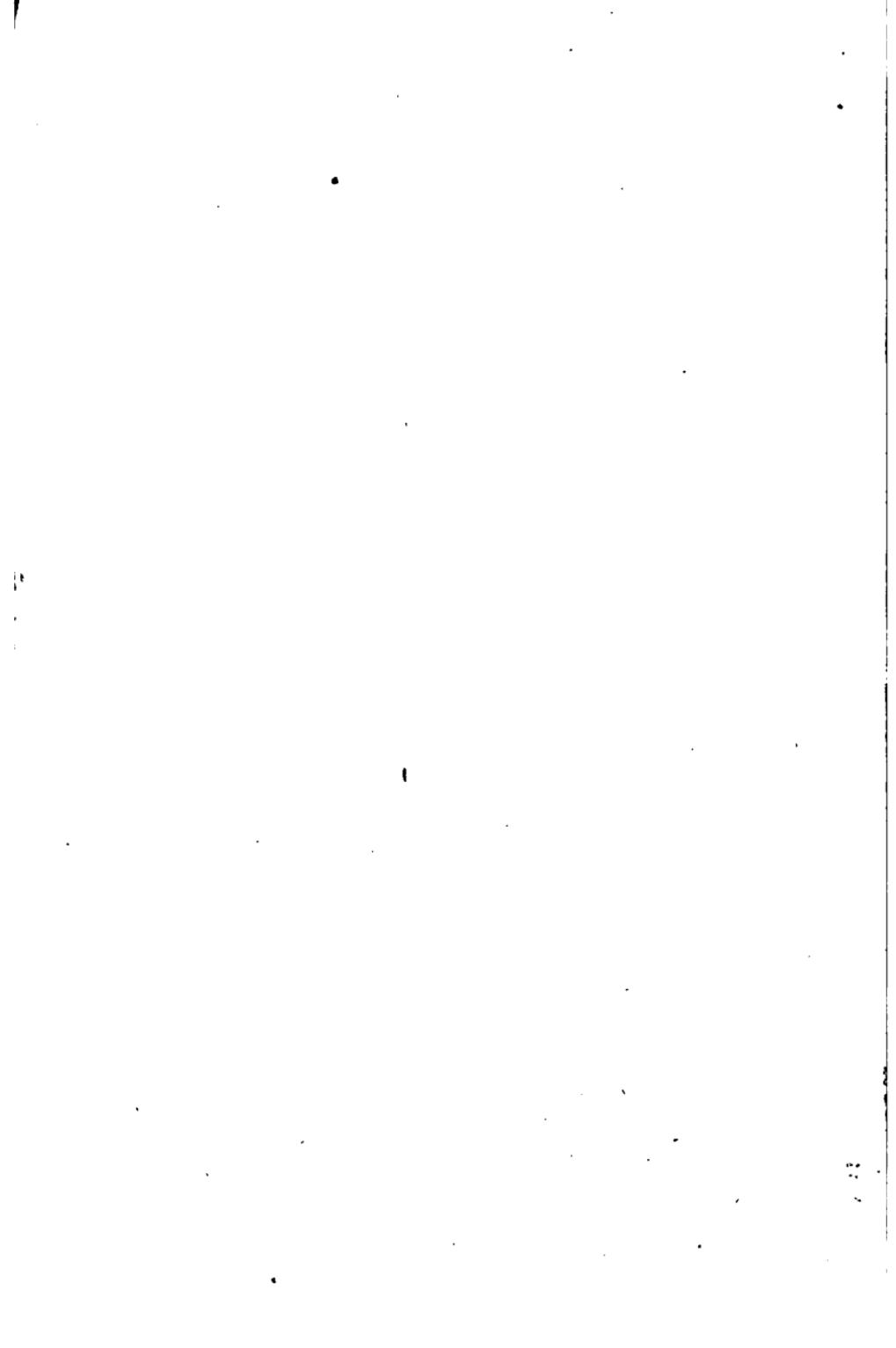
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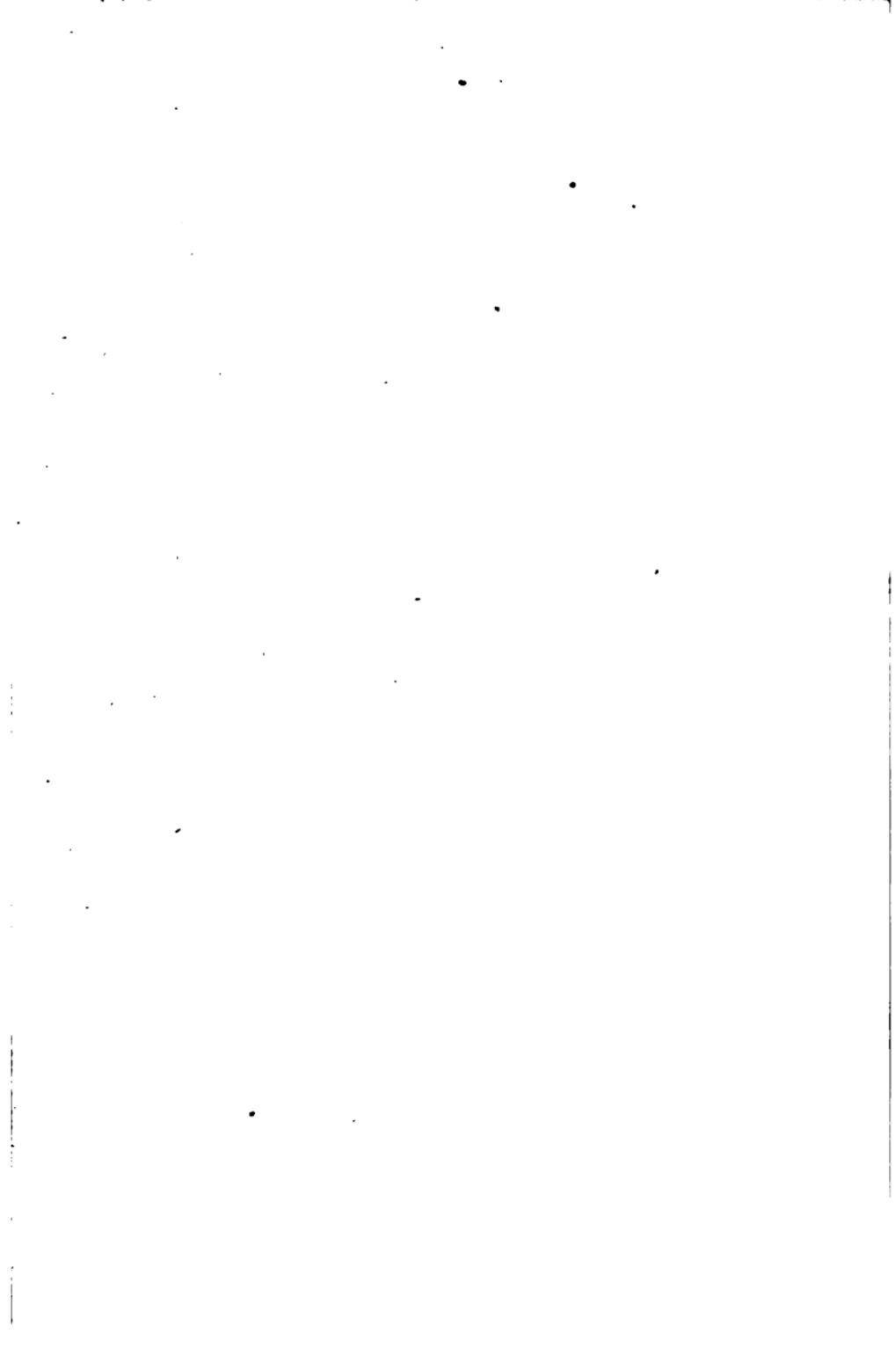
Yes, haply thou dost sleep, and haply dream.  
    Were mine the power, thy dreamings should be sweet ;  
    For all things chaste and beautiful should meet  
To form the scenes thou dream'st of. There should beam  
A purer splendour than did ever stream  
    From sun or star, on all that meets thine eye.  
    Above thee there should bend a glorious sky,  
Fair as the heaven of heaven, and round thee gleam  
Waters so pure, that purest angel there  
    Might lave, and fresh'n his plumes. To adorn the sod,  
Flowers of all hues be massed, so wondrous fair,  
    That seraphs, on a mission from their God,  
Would linger o'er them, hovering in the air !  
And all the trees to that bright landscape given,  
Be fit to form the avenues of Heaven !

THIS wintry time reminds me I have been  
Love's pilgrim one whole year. Through shade and shine,  
Love-drawn each sennight, I have sought the shrine  
That caskets thee—thou of my heart the queen.  
In this my weekly pilgrimage, I've seen  
The year don all her robes, and doff them too.  
I saw her don the white, when wild winds blew ;  
I saw her change the white for one of green,  
Flecked with a simple floweret here and there.  
This, then, she doffed, and o'er her shoulders threw  
Another robe, all gorgeousness and glare,  
With warp and woof of richest rainbow hue.  
And this she changed for one of mellower tones ;  
And now, to-day, she dons the white anew.  
Though seasons change, my love all change disowns.

THE END.









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